पुस्तकालय

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार

वर्ग संख्या............ आगत संख्या 138855

पुस्तक विवरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है। इस तिथि सहित ३० वें दिन यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापस आ जानी चाहिए अन्यथा ५० पैसे प्रति दिन के हिसाब से विलम्ब दण्ड लगेगा।

FUNDAMENTAL TEACHING OF VEDAS

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MAURICE PHILLIPS

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PREFACE

This book is intended to answer two questions, *viz.*, (1) what is the fundamental teaching of the Vedas? and (2) what light does that teaching throw on the origin and development of Religion?

There is no book in the English language giving a popular, succinct, and yet an adequate, account of the teaching of the Vedas, the oldest records of the Āryan nations. It is hoped, therefore, that this will supply a want long felt alike by missionaries, ministers, and all interested in the religious history of out fellow-subjects in India.

When I began my missionary career among the Hindus, thirty three years ago, I felt keenly that, in order to be an efficient worker, a knowledge of the religious and speculative thought of the people was absolutely necessary. But there was no book available that could furnish me with such knowledge. I had to gather it little by little; at first from the works of learned specialists, and afterwards form the study of the Vedas, by the aid of pundits. The results are embodied in this volume.

The study of Comparative Religion, which has been popular on the Continent for some years, is now attracting attention in England. It is important, therefore, to point out the bearing of Vedic teaching on the profoundly interesting subject of the Origin and Development of Religion in general. I have endeavoured to do so in this volume; but should my

conclusions in that respect be deemed erroneous by some, the value of the book, as an exposition of Vedic doctrines, will not be diminished in the least. And should it stimulate others, who possess learning and leisure, to study the subject more thoroughly, and expose what may be deemed untenable, none will rejoice more than myself.

I must caution the general reader against concluding that the doctrines of the Vedas, as shown in this book, constitute what is known as Hinduism, or the religion of India today. Hinduism is a mixture of corrupt Vedic doctrines and pre-Āryan cults. Its authoritative guides are the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Purāṇas, the Law Books and the Philosophical Treatises. But, to understand its constituent elements, a knowledge of Vedic doctrines is indispensable. Should life and health continue, I hope, in a subsequent volume, to treat Hinduism on the same plan as I have treated Vedism, when it will become apparent that it is far more irrational and immoral than the religion of the Āryans in the far off Vedic age.

I have no new theory, either about the literature of the Vedeas, or about the aboriginal home of the Āryans. Hence the first chapter is little more than a compilation, – chiefly form the works of Professor Max Müller, whose opinions I accept in preference to those of other.

MAURICE PHILLIPS

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CHAPTER I

THE LITERATURE OF THE VEDAS

"Non-Christian Bibles are all developments in the wrong direction. They all begin with some flashes of true light and end in darkness." —Sir Monier Williams

1. The Saṁhitā, or the Collection of the Vedas

The Hindus divide their literature into two classes: (1) Śruti, "What they have heard with their ears," or Revelation; and (2) Smṛti, "what their fathers transmitted to them," or Tradition. The former includes the Vedas, and the latter all other books based on the authority of the Vedas.[1] This distinction between Revelation and Tradition was made after the ascendancy of the Brahmans as a caste, and prior to the schism of Buddha.

The word Veda is derived from the Sanskrit *vid* or *vidh,* to know, is the same word as appears in the Latin *video,* and the English *wit*. This word is used by the Hindus to denote four collections (*saṁhitās)* of sacred books, called respectively, the Ṛg-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sāma-Veda, and the Atharva-Veda; of these the Ṛg-Veda is by far the most complete and interesting. "This," as Professor Max Müller says, "is the Veda *pār excellence,* containing the real theogony of the Hindus." It is divided (1) into ten *maṇḍalas*

(books), containing 1017 metrical hymns (*sūktas),* arranged according to their authors and the gods to whom they are addresses; and (2) into eight *aṣṭakās (*eight) nearly equal in length, each of which is subdivided into as many *adhyāyas* (lectures), and each of these again into about thirty-three *vargas* (sections), usually containing five verses.

The Yajur-Veda consists principally of prayers and invocations applicable to the consecration of the utensils and materials of sacrificial worship. It has about half the number of hymns found in the Ṛg-Veda, but its contents are not entirely taken form the Ṛg, and it often combines prose with poetry. It is divided into two parts: the white (*śukla)* and the black (*kṛṣṇa*); the former is attributed to the sage Yājñavalkya and the latter to Tittiri.

The Sāma-Veda, which is only about half the size of the Yajur, is a collection of separate texts, taken almost entirely from the Ṛg, to be chanted at particular parts of the sacrifice. "In the Ṛg-Veda we find the entire hymns. In the first part of the Sāma-Vada we fine only isolated verses of those hymns, dislocated from their natural connection, though in the second part the extracts are connected and of greater length."[2] Hence Max Müller says, "These two Vedas, the Yajur-Veda and the Sāma-Veda, were, in truth, what they are called in the Kau-ṣ hitaki-Brāhmaṇa, the attendants of the Ṛg-Veda"[3].

The hymns of the Atharva-Veda are nearly as numerous as those of the Ṛg; but, with the exception of a few of the later hymns of the Ṛg, it has little in common with the other three Vedas, which are used for performing the prescribed sacrifices; whereas the Atharva teaches chiefly how to appease, to bless, to curse, and to rectify what has been wrongly done in the act of sacrifice. A sixth part of its contents is in prose, and about one-sixth of its hymns are found in the Ṛg. Its language and style indicate a later age;[4] and it is not mentioned

by many ancient writers in connection with the other three.[5] It was probably employed at first in the ritual of a different worship.

Each Veda is divided into Mantras and Brāhmaṇas. The mantras are a collection of hymns in which the praises of the gods are sung and their blessings invoked. The Brāhmaṇas are treatises written in prose for the use of the Brahmans, and contain both the liturgical institutes, in which the cremonial application of the hymns is prescribed, and the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, or the theological disquisitions, in which the spiritual aspirations gradually developed in the minds of the more devout of the Indian sages, find expression. It is evident, therefore, that the hymns are the orginal and the most essential portions of the Vedas; that the Brāhmaṇas rose out of the hymns, and are subservient to their employment for the purpose of worship; while the Upaniṣads give expression to speculative ideas of a spiritual and mystical character, which, though discernible in some of the hymns and in the older Brāhmaṇas, are much further developed and systematised in these later treatises.

2. The Authors of the Vedas

It has been the prevalent belief in India for centuries that the Vedas came not form man, but from man, but from God. And though the Hymns are ascribed to various Ṛṣis, or saints, whose names they bear, yet the Hindus have maintained for ages, and continue to maintain, that the Ṛṣis were only "Seers," who intuitively saw them, or vehicles through which they were communicated by divine power. Hence many conflicting theories of inspiration have been propounded, and many contradictory schemes for proving the divine origin of the Vedas have been set forth. According to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, and the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad,

Prajāpati by brooding over the three elements, fire, air and the sun, produced form them respectively, the Ṛg-Yajur-, and Sāma-Vedas. The same origin is ascribed to them by the lawgiver Manu, who doubtless borrowed the idea from the Brāhmaṇas. He says that Brahma, "for the performance of sacrifice, milked out from fire, from air, and from the sun, the triple eternal *Veda*, distinguished as Ṛg, Yajur, and Sāma". In the Viṣṇu and Bhāgvata-Purāṇas, we are told that the Vedas were created by the four-faced Brahma from his several mouths; while in the Mahābhārata their origin is ascribed to the goddess of wisdom, Sarasvatī, who is denominated the "mother of Vedas". The Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad describes them as the breath of Brahma; and the Hari-Vaṁśa declares that they were produced from the Gāyatrī, the holiest verse in the Vedas. According to the ninth verse of the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda*, the first three Vedas were derived from the mystical victim *Puruṣa*. "From that universal sacrifice were produced the hymns called Ṛg, and Sāman, the metres and the Yajuṣ." And according to the Atharva-Veda both the Ṛg and the Yajuṣ sprang from time. Most of the philosophers argue with much ingenuity in favour of the superhuman origin of the Vedas; while a few go so far as so deny to them any origin, and strenuously maintain that they have always existed.

These conflicting accounts of the origin of the Vedas clearly show that the belief in a Book-Revelation is deeply rooted in the religious consciousness of the Hindus. Strang to say, however, there is but little in the hymns themselves to warrant such a belief. "The Ṛṣis," as an ancient Hindu author remarks, "desiring various objects, hastened to the gods with metrical prayers." They represent themselves and their fore-fathers – for they distinguish between ancient and modern Ṛṣ is and between old and new hymns – as the "*markers,*" "*fabricators*" and "*generators*" of the hymns. "These your

ancient exploits, O Aśvins, our fathers have declared! Let us who are strong in bold men, *making* a hymn for you, O bountiful gods! utter our offering of praise."[6] "Seeking heaven, the Kṣusikas have *made* a hymn to thee, O Indra!"[7] "Thus have we *made a* prayer for Indra, the productive, the vigorous, as the Bhṛgus made a car."[8] "An acceptable and honorific hymn has been uttered to Indra by Bṛhaduktha, *maker* of prayers."[9] "Thus, O hero, hath Gṛtsamda, desiring succour, *fashioned* for thee a hymn, as men make roads."[10] "To this great hero, vigorous, energetic, the adorable, unshaken thunderer, I have with my mouth *fabricated* copious and pleasing prayers, which had never before existed."[11] "Agni, do thou thrive through this our prayer, which we *make* according to our ability according to our knowledge; do thou, therefore, lead us to opulence, and endow us with right understanding, securing food."[12] "This hymn, Aśvins, we have *made* for you; we have *fabricated* it as the Bhṛgus constructed a car; we have decorated it as a bride for her husband, continuing the series of our praises like an unbroken line of descendants."[13] "Indra, the wise Ṛṣis, both ancient and modern, have *generated* prayers."[14] "Ayāsya, friend of all men, celebrating Indra, hath *generated* the fourth song of praise.[15]" "From the sacred ceremony I *send forth* a prayer issuing from my mind."[16]

But though the ancient Ṛṣis know nothing of the artificial theories of inspiration which have been elaborated in later times, and though they generally represent themselves or their ancestors as the authors of the hymns, yet it must not be overlooked that they were not altogether unconscious of higher influences. Some of them seem to have had a vague idea that they were inspired by the gods, and hence speak of their prayers as "*divine* utterances," "hymns generated by the gods". One speaks of his prayer as "god-given" *(devadattam)*.[17] Another says, "From no other but you (O Indra and Agni!)

do I derive intelligence"; and another, "Indra! gladden me; decree life for me; *sharpen my intellect,* like the edge of an iron instrument. Whatever I, longing for thee, now utter, do thou accept; give me divine protection."[18] Gotama prays, "Approach and listen to our prayers, Maghavan; since thou hast inspired us with true speech, thou art solicited with it".[19] And Vāk, the goddess of speech, says, "By sacrifice they followed the path of Vāk; they found her residing in the Ṛṣis".[20] "Indra and Varuṇa, I have seen through devotion, that which ye formerly gave to the Ṛṣis, wisdom, understanding of speech, sacred lore, and all the places which the sages created when performing sacrifice"[21] "May Varuṇa grant me wisdom, may Agni and Prajāpati confer on me sapience; may Indra and Vāyu vouchsafe me knowledge; may providence give me understanding; be this oblation happily offered,"[22] "We meditate that excellent glory of the divine Sāvitri, or sun; may he stimulate our understanding"[23] This last is the celebrated Gāyatri, which for more than 3000 years has been the daily prayer of every Brahman, and is still repeated by millions of pious worshippers.

It is evident from these passages that the ancient Ṛṣis were conscious of higher influences, of divine help; and this is not to be wondered at; for it is only a manifestation of that deep-felt dependence on some superior power, or powers, which man everywhere has experienced more or less, and probably in no part of the world more than in India. This, however, is very different from the theories of inspiration now held by Hindus respecting the utterances of the Ṛṣis, or by Christians respecting the subject-matter of the Bible. This was only an excitement, or a conscious exhilaration, similar to that experienced by the poets of Greece and Rome[24] when invoking the Muses to assist them in the composition of their songs; but it was probably the germ from which the present doctrine of inspiration grew.

The authors of the Vedas were from the Kṣatriya or kingly, as well as from the Brahman or priestly, class. Viśvāmitra, one of the seven great *Ṛṣis*,[25] and the author of the Gayatrī; Jamadagni, the reputed father of the *Avatāra* (incarnation) Paraśurāma; Devāpi, Madhucha-candās, Trasadasyu, Māndhātara, Sibi, Vasumanas, Pratardana, and others, were of the kingly class. A few of the hymns of the Ṛg-Veda are ascribed even to females, real or imaginary, as Śraddhā, the daughter of Kāma; and Vāk, the daughter of Ambhrina. Viśvavārā, a daughter of Atri, not only composed the twenty-eighth hymn of the fifth Maṇḍala of the Ṛg-Veda, but discharged the duties of a priest, worshipping the gods at dawn with praises and oblations.

Ṛṣis and priests married the daughters of kings; such as Cayavāna who married Sukanyā, the daughter of Saryāta; and Jamadagni who married Renukā, the daughter of Renu. The great Ṛṣi Kakṣīvān married the ten daughters of Rāja Svanaya, the son of Bhāvayavya, with whom he had a large dowry which he thus celebrates: "From which generous prince soliciting (my acceptance), I, Kakṣīvān, unhesitatingly accepted one hundred necklets, one hundred vigorous steeds, and one thousand bulls, whereby he has spread his imperishable fame through heaven. Ten chariots, drawn by bay steeds and carrying my wives, stood near me, given by Svanaya; and sixty thousand cows followed. Forty bay horses, harnessed to the chariots, lead the procession in front of one thousand followers."[26] The hard and fast lines of caste were unknown in those days, and women occupied a very much higher position than they do at present.

The Ṛṣis, like the ancient Druids, were poets and priests. They stood between the people and the gods. They appeased the latter with offerings, and encouraged the former with songs in all conflicts with their enemies. They were in no

sense ascetics, or Saṁnyāsis, living a peculiarly holy life in the jungles, apart from wife, children, and the good things of this life, as is now generally supposed by Hindus. But they were men the burden of whose songs was temporal blessings —health, long life, offspring, riches, cattle, food, rain and victory. One Ṛṣi acknowledges the substantial gift of one hundred steeds, and sixty thousand herds of pure cattle made to him by a Rāja, and prays the "immortal deity" that his wealth may be permanent.[27] Another prays, "Be willing to grant us abundant food with cattle, (to grant us) protection, progeny and vigour. May that herd of swift horses which formerly shone among the people of Nahuṣa (be granted), Indra, to us."[28] In the same strain Vatsa, the son of Kaṇva, addresses the Aśvins, "Delighters of many, abounding in wealth, bestowers of riches, Aśvins, sustainers of all, approve of this mine adoration. Grant us, Aśvins, all riches that may not bring us shame; make us the begetters of progeny in due season; subject us not to reproach. Give, Nāsatyas, food of many kinds dripping with butter to him, the Ṛṣi Vatsa, who has magnified you both with hymns. Give, Aśvins, invigorating food dripping with butter to him who praises you, the lords of liberality, to obtain happiness, who desires affluence. Confounders of the malignant, partakers of many (oblations), come to this our adoration, render us prosperous, O heroes, give these good things of earth to our desires."[29] Another Ṛṣi prays, "Grant us abundant treasures. Grant the opulence which many crave, store of heroes, progeny, and high renown. Agni, most youthful of the gods, send evermore the gift of wealth."[30] And another boastfully says, "Earning two hundred cows and two cars with mares, the gift of Sudās, grandson of Devavāt, and son of Pijavana, I walk about as a priest does round a house offering praises. The four robust, richly caparisoned, brown horses of Sudās, the son of Pijavana, standing on the earth, carry me, son to son, onward to renown

in perpetuity.[31]" Ṛṣi Sobhari extols the liberality of the Rāja Trasadasyu, who had given him fifty brides; and Syāva, the lord of kine, who had given him a present of seventy-three cows."[32] And Rṣi Nodhās prays, "Grant us, O Maruts, durable riches attended by posterity, and—mortifying to our enemies—(riches) reckoned by hundreds and thousands, and ever increasing. May they who have acquired wealth by pious acts come hither, quickly, in the morning."[33] In R.V., iv., 32, 17, 21, the worshipper asks Indra to give him a thousand yoked horses, a thousand jars of soma, hundreds of thousands of cows; acknowledges that he had received ten golden jars, and urges the god not to be sparing but to bestow abundantly in conformity with his character for liberality.

The Ṛṣis were on most familiar terms with the gods, and occasionally administered a gentle rebuke to them for their apparent niggardliness to their votaries. One says, "If, Indra, I were as thou art, sole lord over wealth, then should my eulogist be possessed of cattle. Lord of might, I would give to that intelligent worshipper that which I should wish to give if I were the possessor of cattle." And another says, "If, Agni, thou wert a mortal and I an immortal, I should not abandon thee to malediction or to wretchedness; my worshipper should not be miserable or distressed". "If I were thou, and thou wert I, then thy wishes should be fulfilled."[34]

In the fifty-fifth hymn of the seventh *Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛg-*Veda, the holy sage Vasiṣṭha is represented as having entered the house of Varuṇa by night, in order to steal grain to appease his hunger after a fast of three days, and, when assailed by the watch-dog, as having uttered a prayer or incantation to make it sleep, and so having given a direct encouragement to theft. And Ṛṣi Ajigarta, the son of Sūyavasa, for one hundred cows, sold his son Śunaśepha to be sacrificed.

Max Müller says, "In the Ṛg-Veda we find hymns which the Brahmans themselves allow to be the compositions of the son of a slave. Kavaṣa Ailūṣa is the author of several hymns in the tenth book of the Ṛg-Veda; yet this same Kava-ṣa was expelled from the sacrifice as an impostor and as the son of a slave *(dasyah-putra),* and he was re-admitted only because the gods had shown him special favour. This is acknowledged by the Brāhmaṇas of the Aitareyins and Kauṣitakins, and in the Mahābhārata also Kavaśa is called a Niṣāda, or out-caste."[35]

3. The Age of the Vedas

The age of the Vedas can only be approximately ascertained. The Hindus have no history and no authentic chronology. Life to them has always been a dream; an illusion. "Their struggles were struggles of thought; their past the problem of creation; their future the problem of existence. The present alone, which is the real and living solution of the problems of the past and future, seems never to have attracted their thoughts or to have called out their energies." Hence they have no political history like the Egyptians, the Jews, the Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans; and no certain date in the wide range of their literature, except what is imported from Greek history. We learn from Greek writers that in the time of Alexander *the Great* and his successors there was a powerful king of the Prasii, Sandracottus or Sandrocyptus by name, whose capital was Palibothra, on the confluence of the Ganges, and the Erannaboas, or Sone, which is probably the same as the modern Patna. He contracted an alliance with *Seleucus* Nicator, and Megasthenes visited his court several times in the capacity of an ambassador. This Sandracottus of the Greeks is identified with the Hindu king Chandragupta, the usurper of the throne of the Nandas, and the founder of the Maurya

dynasty at Pāṭaliputra. He is supposed to have reigned from B.C. 315 to 291. He was the grandfather of Aśoka, under whose authority Buddhism became the State religion of India, in the middle of the third century.

Under the preceding dynasty, that of the Nandas, Brahmanical traditions place a number of distinguished scholars, whose treatises on the Vedas are still extant; such as, Saunaka, Āśvalāyana, Kātyāyana, Pāṇini, and others. Kātyāyana is the author of two Anukramaṇis, or general indexes—one to the Ṛg-Veda, and the other to the white *Y*ajur-Veda. He is also the author of certain works called "Sūtras". "Sūtra" means "string," and all works written in this style are nothing but strings of short sentences containing the essence of Brahmanical lore expressed in the most concise form possible, and thus forming a great contrast to the tedious prolixity of the Brāhmaṇas. The Sūtra style of composition was so universally prevalent in India at one time as to mark a definite literary era, called the "Sūtra period". According to Hindu traditions Kātyāyana was contemporary with King Nanda and his successor, Yōgānanda, at Pāṭaliputra, immediately before the usurpation of Chandragupta. He was preceded by Āśvalāyana and his teacher Śaunaka, whose works he studied. He also corrected and completed the grammar of Pāṇini. Max Müller, in his History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, says, "If we place Kātyāyana in the second half of the fourth century B.C.; Āśvalāyana, the predecessor of Kātyāyana, about 350; and Śaunaka, the teacher of Āśvalāyana, about 400; and if then, considering the writers of Sūtras anterior to Śaunaka and posterior to Kātyāyana, we extend the limits of the Sūtra period of literature from 600 to 200 B.C., we are still able to say that there is no fact in history or literature that would interfere with such an arrangement".[36] All dates, however, previous to Candragupta are merely hypothetical.

The Brāhmaṇas are intermediate between the Sūtras and the Mantras. As the Sūtras presuppose the Brāhmaṇas, so the Brāhmaṇas presuppose the Mantras. There are old and new Brāhmaṇas, and there are long lists in the Brāhmaṇas of teachers, who handed down old Brāhmaṇas, or who composed new ones. The interval between the composition of the latest Brāhmaṇa and the commencement of the Sūtra period was so great as to enable the Brāhmans to raise the Brāhmaṇas to the dignity of *śruti,* or Revelation, and so to place them on the same footing as the Mantras. When these facts are considered, it is concluded that 200 years, at least, were necessary for the production of the Brāhmaṇas, or from about 800 to 600 B.C.

But before a single line of the Brāhmaṇas could have been composed, the four collections of hymns, as we now possess them, must have been completed, and the four classes of priests, for whose guidance the Brāhmaṇas were composed, must have been formed. That a long time must have elapsed between the completion of the *Saṁhitās* of the hymns and the composition of the Brāhmaṇas, is evident from the fact that the authors of the Brāhmaṇas often fail to understand the meaning of the hymns. For example, in the spontaneous poetry of the Ṛṣis, the sun is called the "golden-handed" *(hiranya-hastah)*;[37] but the authors of the Brāhmaṇas, unable to understand the poetical meaning of this epithet, to explain it have invented a story that the sun, having lost one hand, received a golden one. Again, in a beautiful hymn of the Ṛg-Veda, whose refrain is "Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? " *(Kasmaidevāya haviṣa vidhema),* the authors of the Brāhmaṇas, unable to enter into the spirit of the hymn and the yearning of the poet to know the true God, thought that the interrogative pronoun "*ka*" or "who," must be the God addressed, and that wherever the interrogative

"*ka*" occurs, it is the same as Prajāpati, the "lord of creatures". In like manner the name *Indra,* the Jupiter Pluvius of India, is fancifully derived from *idamdra,* "it seeing". Then there are ancient and modern hymns, hymns of the fathers, and hymns of the sons. Max Müller calls the former *Chandas,* and the latter *Mantras,* and assigns a period of two hundred years to each.

The age of the Vedic writings according to Müller – from whose works most of the particulars in this section have been taken – will then be as follows : –

Sūtra period from	B.C. 200 to 600.
Brāhmaṇas	,, 600 to 800.
Mantra	,, 800 to 1000.
Chandas	,, 1000 to 1200.

Professors Wilson, Whitney, and M. Barth regard Müller's limits for the "Mantra" and "Chandas" periods as too narrow; and Dr. Haug, a high authority, considers the Vedic period to extend from B.C. 1200 to B.C. 2000, and the very oldest hymns (Müller's Chandas) to have been composed B.C. 2400.

4. The Language of the Vedas

The Vedas were composed in the Sanskrit language, which means the *sacred* or the *polished* tongue. Sanskrit is closely connected in grammar and vocabulary with the Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Celtic, Sclavonic, and Zend. Hence all are grouped together by comparative philologists under one class, called the "Āryan," or "Indo-European". These seven languages are sisters, holding the same relation to one another as French, Spanish, and Italian; and they are related to some primitive lost tongue, as these Romance languages are to the Latin. A comaparison of the Āryan languages has placed it beyond a doubt that the ancestors of the Greeks, Italians,

Germans, Celts, Sclavonians, Persians, and Hindus were at one time living together as one family within the same precincts, separate from the ancestors of the Semitic and Turanian races; that they emigrated at different times and in different directions – the first fve towards the North-west, and the last two towards the South and the East – from a region in central Asia of which Bactriana was probably the centre; that they were originally a pastoral race; and that they gradually changed their habits as they settled down in Europe, Persia and Hindustan.

The terms for God, for father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, hearts and tears, are identical in these languages. This could, not have been accidental, for they were appellatives before they were prope names. The name for God is derived from a root *dyu,* to shine, and means the "shining one"; the term for father is from *pa,* to protect, and means the protector of his family; mother is from *ma,* to make or fashion; daughter is derived from a root *duh,* to milk, and means "the little milkmaid of the family"; the original meaning of brother is "he who carries," or, "he who assists"; and of sister, "she who pleases," or "consoles". Before the Āryans parted they had names for the family relationships which are expressed in English by the addition of "in-law," as father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law; thus showing a great advance in civilisation. They had words for house, door, and windows, which show that they were not nomads, but lived in fixed abodes. The word for boat or ship is the same in all these languages; but the words for masts, sails, yards, are different; thus showing that the *Āryans* before their separation went only in boats with oars on the rivers of their land, the Oxus and Jaxartes, and did not sail anywhere on the ocean. They had hatchets, ploughs, and mills for grinding corn. They cultivated barley, and

perhaps other cereals. They had names for cooking and baking; and they made a distinction between raw flesh and cooked meat. The names for clothes and sewing are the same among all the Āryan nations; and hence it is evident that they were acquainted with the art of weaving and sewing. They were also acquainted with silver, gold, copper, and tin. They had the same names for tree, cattle, ox, horse, dog, sheep, mouse, wolf, serpents, etc. Max Müller says, "It is hardly possible to look at the evidence hitherto collected . . . without feeling that these words are the fragments of a real language once spoken by a united race at a time which the historian has till lately hardly ventured to realise. Yet we have in our hands the relics of that distant time; we are using the same words which were used by the fathers of the Āryan race, changed only by phonetic influences; nay, we are as near to them in thought and speech as the French and Italians are to the ancient people of Rome. If any more proof was wanted as to the reality of that period which must have preceded the dispersion of the Āryan race, we might appeal to the Āryan numerals as irrefragable evidence of that long-continued intellectual life which characterises that period. Here is a decimal system of numeration, in itself one of the most marvellous achievements of the human mind, based on an abstract conception of quantity, regulated by a spirit of philosophical classification, and yet conceived, matured, and finished before the soil of Europe was trodden by Greek, Roman, Slave, or Teuton."[38]

5. The Vedas orally Transmitted

When the four collections of the Vedas were arranged by Védavyāsa, their mythical compiler, when the Brāhmaṇas were composed, and probably for three hundred or four hundred years afterwards, writing was unknown in India. For had it been known, it is pretty certain that some mention

of it would have been made in Vedic literature. When reading the Old Testament we often meet with words denoting-writing, reading, pen and book. In Exodus we find that Moses, having received the ten commandments, "went clown from the Mount, and the two tables of testimony were in his hand : the tables were written on both their sides: on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God."[39] Again, "And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people".[40] The Psalmist says, "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me".[41] "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer."[42] And Job exclaims, "Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever."[43] Such words as these prove beyond a doubt that the prophets of the Old Testament, and the nations among whom they prophesied, were acquainted with the art of writing. We look in vain, however, in the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, and even in the Sūtras, for words denoting writing, reading, pen and book. For reading we have *addyeti* or *adhiti,* to go over or to repeat; for chapters, *adhyāyas,* lectures; and for books we have *charanas,* or families in whose memory books were preserved and orally transmitted. It is evident, therefore, that all the literature of the Vedas was handed down orally, like the Homeric poems. Every Brahman had to learn the Vedas by heart during the twelve or more years of his student life. The Guru, or teacher, pronounced a group of words, and the pupils repeated them after him. Caesar says the same of the Druids. And long after writing was introduced the Brahmans were strictly forbidden to write or read the Vedas. In the Mahābhārata it is written, "Those who sell the Vedas, and even those who write them, those also who defile them, they shall go to hell".

Writing was probably known in India before the conquest of Alexander the Great. We find in the Lalitavistāra, a book containing the life of Buddha, which was translated into Chinese, 76 A.D., that the boy Buddha knew how to write, and is even represented as teaching his Guru, Viśvāmitra, the names of sixty-four Sanskrit letters, just as Jesus is represented in the "gospel of the infancy" as explaining to His teacher the meaning of the Hebrew alphabet. We have, however, the more reliable testimony of inscriptions that writing was known in India during the early period of Buddhism. The inscriptions of Aśoka (B.C. 250) on the rocks of Kapurdigiri near Peshawar, Dhouli in Orissa, Girnār in Gujerat, and other places, are proof positive of this. They are written in two different characters, and call themselves *lipi,* a writing, and Dharmalipi, sacred writing. The inscriptions of Kapurdigiri are written from right to left, and the letters are evidently of Semitic origin, most closely connected with the Aramaic branch of the old Semitic or Phoenician alphabet. The characters of the other inscriptions, though written from left to right, show traces of having been once written in the contrary direction. This, and the imperfect system of marking the vowels, point to a Semitic origin; but whether the writing was introduced from Phoenicia by Phoenician traders, or from an Aramaic character used in Persia or Babylon, is not yet settled. Dr. Burnell, judging from a docket attached to one of the Babylonian tablets in the British Museum, concluded that it was introduced from the latter.[44] However, it is certain that there is no trace of the development in India of an original independent system of writing.[45]

It is well known that the Phoenicians had commercial intercourse with India from the earliest times. Solomon's ships of Tarshish, manned by Phoenician seamen, sailed to the south and west of India, and imported thence peacocks,

apes, and ivory, which are called in Hebrew *tukhi-im, koph im, shenhabb-im,* horns of teeth.[46] *Tokei* is the old Tamil word for a peacock, and is still used for a peacock's tail; *koph* is a word without etymology in the Semitic languages, but is nearly identical in sound with the Sanskrit name for ape, *kapi*. The word in this form has been found also in Egyptian hieroglyphics of the seventeenth century B.C.; thus showing, not only the early occupation of India by the Āryans, but their intimate commercial intercourse with the West long before the time of Solomon.[47] *Habbim* is without a derivation in Hebrew, but it may be a corruption of the Sanskrit name for an elephant, *ibha,* preceded by the Semitic article *ha*. This supposition, however, is not free from difficulties.

The Chaldean traders made their way to India at a very early period, probably more than 3000 B.C. Professor Sayce says in his *Hibbert Lectures,* "Apart from the existence of teak in the ruins of Mugheir, an ancient Babylonian list of clothing mentions *sindhu,* or 'muslin'; the *sadin* of the Old Testament That is merely 'the Indian' cloth has long been recognised; and the fact that it begins with a sibilant and not with a vowel, like our 'Indian,' proves that it must have come to the West by sea and not by land, where the original *s* would have become *h* in Persian mouths – supposing, of course, that Iranian tribes were already settled to the east of Babylon. That *sindhu* is really the same word is shown by its Accadian equivalent, which is expressed by ideographs signifying literally 'vegetable cloth'."

The Persians conquered a part of the North-west of India under Darius, B.C. 500; and in the inscriptions at Persepolis and Naksh-i-rus-tram, India occurs as the twenty-first and thirteenth province, respectively, of that monarch's empire. According to Herodotus, India was the twentieth satrapy, and it paid as tribute three hundred and sixty talents

of gold.[48] It is evident, therefore, from the commercial intercourse of the Phoenicians, and the political intercourse of the Persians, whose alphabet is traceable to a Semitic origin, that the Hindu alphabet might have been introduced from the same source.

The Greek writers, Nearchus (B.C. 325) and Megasthenes (B.C. 202), both declare that the Hindus had no laws and no books; but the former says that they wrote on a sort of cotton cloth or paper, and the latter that they had milestones at a distance of ten stadia from one another, indicating the resting-places and distances. Max Müller concludes, therefore, that "writing was known to the Hindus before Alexander's conquest, but that they had not then begun to use it for literary purposes—the Brahmans not having got over their prejudice against the use of letters as the medium of preserving and communicating their sacred books". And Dr. Burnell says, "Writing was, certainly, little used in India before B.C. 250".

6. The General Character of Vedic Literature

The general style and character of Vedic literature should not be judged from the quotations and doctrines which appear in this book. It has been my endeavour to clear away the rubbish, and bring to light the precious gems of truth which lay embedded among much that is puerile and unmeaning. Though the Mantra portions of the Vedas consist of hymns or metrical verses, it is painfully obvious, to any one reading them, either in the original or in translations, that they have but very little poetry, understanding by that word lofty conceptions and striking thoughts expressed in chaste, measured language. The hymns abound in tedious repetitions and puerile ideas, which form a great contrast to the easy

flow and elevated conceptions of the sacred poetry of the Hebrews. Their only charm lies in the small rays of light which they throw on the most ancient thoughts, habits, and conflicts of the Hindu Āryans. The Brāhmaṇa portions are more disappointing still. I cannot describe them better than in the words of Professor Max Müller: "The general character of these works (Brāhmaṇas) is marked by shallow and insipid grandiloquence, by priestly conceits, and antiquarian pedantry". Again, "These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots and the ravings of madmen. They will disclose to a thoughtful eye the ruins of faded grandeur; the memories of noble aspirations. But let us only try to translate these works into our own language, and we shall feel astonished that human language and human thought should ever have been used for such purposes."[49] Again, he says respecting the Upaniṣads – which undoubtedly form the best portions of the Brāhmaṇas, and which in his Hibbert Lectures he pronounced unrivalled, not only in the literature of India, but in the literature of the world, – "They" (the difficulties of translating them) "consist in the extraordinary number of passages which seem to us utterly meaningless and irrational, or, at all events, so far-fetched that we can hardly believe that the same authors who can express the deepest thoughts on religion and philosophy with clearness, nay, with a kind of poetical eloquence, could have uttered in the same breath such utter rubbish. Some of the sacrificial technicalities, and their philosophical interpretations, with which the Upaniṣads abound, may perhaps in time assume a clearer meaning, when we shall have more fully mastered the intricacies of the Vedic ceremonial. But there will always remain in the Upaniṣads a vast amount of what we can only call meaningless jargon, and for the presence of which in

these ancient mines of thought I, for my own part, feel quite unable to account."[50]

The Mantras, the oldest portions of Vedic literature, are by far the most interesting and instructive. The Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, though later in time, show considerable decline in thought and style. How can this be accounted for on the theory of "Evolution" or "Upward progress"?

REFERENCES

1. Smṛti comprehends all *post*-Vedic literature under four heads: (i). The six Vedāṅgas, *viz*.: (1) Śikṣā, the science of pronunciation; (2) Chands, metre; (3) Vyākaraṇa, grammar; (4) Nirukta, explanation of Vedic words; (5) Jyoti ṣa, astronomy; and (6) Kalpa, ceremonial, including Śrauta-Sūtras, rules for applying the Mantras and Brāhmaṇas to Vedic sacrifices; Gṛya-Sūtras, rules relating to domestic rights; Sāmayā-Cārika-Sūtras, rules relating to conventional usages; the last two are called Smarta-Sūtras. (ii) The Darśanas, systems of philosophy. (iii) The Dharma-Sutras, law books such as Manu, Yājñavalkya, and others, which are supposed to have grown out of the Smarta-Sūtras. (iv) The Itihāsas, *viz*.: the two epic poems, the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa; the eighteen Purāṇas, or ancient legendary lore: and the Tantras.
2. Muir's *Sans. Texts,* pt. ii., p. 203.
3. *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.,* p. 457.
4. Professor Whitney remarks, "The greater portion of them (the hymns) are plainly shown, both by their language and internal character, to be of much later date than the general contents of the other historic Veda (the Ṛg), and even than its tenth book, with which they stand nearly connected in import and origin. The condition of the text also in those passages found likewise in the Ṛg, points as distinctly to a more recent period as that of their collection". (Muir's *Sans. Texts,* pt. ii., p. 201).

5. It is not mentioned in the ninth verse of the Puruṣa-Sūkta (R.V., x., 90); neither is it mentioned in the following passages in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad: "Prajāpati brooded (or meditated upon) the worlds; and from them, so brooded, he drew forth their essences: Fire from the earth, Air from the atmosphere, the Sun from the sky. He brooded on these three deities, and from themk, so brooded, he drew forth their essences: Ṛg-texts from Fire, Yajuṣ-texts from Air, and Sāma-texts from the Sun. He brooded on this triple science, and from it, so brooded, he drew forth its essences: the particle *Bhūh* from the Ṛg-texts; *Bhuvah* from the Yajuṣ-texts; *Svar* from the Sāma-texts. Manu, i., 23, repeates the account given in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, omitting the fourth Veda (Muir's *Sans. Texts,* pt. ii., p. 200). It is, however, mentioned as a Veda in another passage of the same Upaniṣad, and also in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa." (Max Müller, *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.,* pp. 122 and 38).
6. R.V., i., 117, 25.
7. *Ibid.,* iii., 30, 20.
8. *Ibid.,* iv., 16, 20.
9. *Ibid.,* x., 54, 6.
10. *Ibid.,* ii., 19, 8.
11. *Ibid.,* vi., 32,
12. *Ibid.,* i., 31, 18.
13. *Ibid.,* x., 39, 14.
14. *Ibid.,* vii., 2, 29.
15. R.V., x., 67, I.
16. *Ibid.,* viii, 13, 26.
17. *Ibid.,* iii., 37, 4; iv., II, 3.
18. *Ibid.,* vi., 47, 10.
19. *Ibid.,* i., 1, 82, 1.
20. *Ibid.,* x., 71, 3.
21. Vālakhlya of the Ṛg-Veda.

22. Yajur-Veda, as quoted by Colebrooke, *Miscellaneus Essay,* p. 32.
23. That Savitur varṇyaṁ bharg dēvasya dhīmahi dhiyō yō naḥ pracō dayāt. (R.V., iii., 62, 10).
24. "Tell to me now, O ye Muses, who dwell in Olympian mansions, Ye who are goddesses present, and knowing all things which befall men.

    Things of which we may hear rumours, but never get accurate knowledge". (*Iliad,* ii., 484).

    "Musa mihi causes memora," etc. (*Aen., i.,* II).
25. According to Wilson's Viṣṇu *Purāṇa,* p. 264, the seven great Ṛṣis were—Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama, Viśvāmitra and Bharadvāja.
26. R.V., i., 126, 2, 3, 4.
27. R.V., viii., 4, 19, 20.
28. *Ibid.,* viii., 6, 23, 24.
29. *Ibid.,* viii., 8, 12, 17.
30. *Ibid.,* viii., 24, 27, 28.
31. R.V., vii., 18, 22, 23.
32. *Ibid.,* viii., 19, 36, 7.
33. *Ibid.,* i., 64, 15.
34. R.V., viii., 19, 25; viii., 44, 3.
35. Max Müller's *Hist Anc. Sans. Lit.,* pp. 58, 9.
36. *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.,* pp. 244, 5.
37. R.-V., i., 35, 10.
38. *Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. ii., pp. 50, 51.
39. Ex., xxxii., 15, 16.
40. *Ibid.,* xxiv., 7.
41. Ps., xl., 7.
42. Ibid., xlv., I.
43. Job, xix., 23, 24.
44. *Academy* for June 17, 1882.
45. Dr. Burnell, *E.S.I. Paleography,* chap. i., and Max Müller's *Science of Language,* Ist series, pp. 208, 9.

46. I Kings, x., 22.
47. Weber's *Hist. of Indian Lit.*, p. 3.
48. See Dr. Burnell, *E.S.I.P.*, p. 3.
49. *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.*, p. 389.
50. *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xv., p. 19.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGY OF THE VEDAS

"All men yearn after the gods." – HOMER

"The world through its wisdom knew not God." – PAUL

1. The Number of the Gods

In some Hymns the number of the gods is given as thirty-three. "Ye gods, who are eleven in heaven, who are eleven on earth, and who are eleven dwelling with glory in mid-air, may ye be pleased with this our sacrifice."[1] We have probably a reminiscence of this number in the thirty-three *Ratus* of the Zend-Avesta;[2] an interesting fact, indicating that before the separation of the Indians from the Iranians, considerable progress had been made in polytheistic notions. While, however, under the influence of Zoroaster, a strong reaction early set in against polytheism in Iran, a new impulse was given to it by the gorgeous scenery and diversified climate of India. Hence, in the Ṛg-Veda, we see the number of the gods gradually and almost imperceptibly increasing. Agni is invoked to bring "the three and thirty gods with their wives"[3] The Aśvins are "associated with all the thrice eleven gods, with the Waters, the Maruts, the Bhṛgus, and, united with the Dawn and the Sun, drink the Soma".[4] And "all these gods, thrice eleven in number, are in the secret of Soma".[3] In another hymn, "three hundred, three thousand, thirty and

nine gods" are said to have "worshipped Agni".[6] In the Atharva-Veda the Gandharvas, or demigods, alone amount to six thousand three hundred and thirty-three.[7]" The number of Vedic gods, though large, sinks into insignificance when compared with the total number of Hindu gods, which the traditions of the present age give, viz., *three hundred and thirty-three millions!*

2. The Nature of the Gods

The gods are spoken of in the Ṛg-Veda as the "former" and the latter, the "old" and the "young". The "former" are the gods of Poetry, and the "latter" the gods of Philosophy. The chief characteristics of the "former" are concrete or Physical, and of the "latter" abstract or Metaphysical. We shall consider them under these designations.

(a) Physical Gods

All the gods in this class appeal, more or less, to the senses, and hence are called "semi-tangible" by Professor Max Müller in his Hibbert Lectures.

The first of these is the sky in its various aspects and under various names. The sky is undoubtedly the oldest object of worship in the Veda, and one of its oldest names *as such* is *Dyaus*[8] a name identified with the Greek *Zeus*, and the Latin *Ju* in Jupiter. Dyaus is called Pitar, Father; and the compound Dyaushpitar is almost as much one word as *Jupiter* or Zeuspater. Dyaushpitar, Heaven-Father, or Bright Father, reminds us both of "Our Father, who art in heaven".[9] and of "the Father of Lights".[10] The sky is also called Dyaush pita janita:[11] Dyaush, the Father, the Creator; and the mighty Dyu, the maker of Indra.[12]

Dyaus did not lose its appellative character in the literature of India as Zeus did in the literature of Greece,[13] and hence did not occupy the same position of pre-eminence

among the gods of India as that which Zeus occupied among the gods of Greece. Indra, his son, became the Zeus of India, and Dyaus had to bow down before him, for his greatness exceeded the heaven (Dyaus).[14]

Varuṇa, the Ouranos[15] of the Greeks and the Ahura-Mazda[16] of the Persians, is another name for the sky, from *var,* to cover, meaning the firmament or the encircling canopy of heaven. Dyaus is the bright or sunny sky; Varuṇa is the all-embracing expanse, the abode of the bright sky and the primary source of all things.[17]

The correspondence in *substance* and in *name* between Varuṇa and Ouranos, and in *substance* between Ahura-Mazda and these two, leads to the conclusion that Varuṇa was the supreme god of the united Āryans in the primitive home. And by comparing the attributes of Varuṇa with those of Ahura-Mazda, and the attributes of both with those of *Zeus-Jupiter,* we arrive at a tolerably correct idea of the conception of God which prevailed among the Indo-Europeans before they separated. We find that they conceived God as the "creator" or "organiser" of the world, the "sovereign Lord," the "omniscient spirit," possessing a moral nature in which justice and mercy were prominent.[18] We find also that this abstract spiritual conception was so closely connected with a concrete material conception that the one could not be separated from the other; and hence both found expression in Varuṇa. Varuṇa therefore represents both the material heaven, and the god of heaven.

Now, while it is obvious that the oldest names for the Heaven-God among the ancestors of the Āryan nations were Dyaus and Varuṇa, it is not so obvious under which name the sky was first worshipped—Dyaus or Varuṇa? The prevalence of the root *dyu* in the name for God in all the Indo-European languages, and especially in the compounds

Dyaushpitar, Zeuspater, Jupiter,[19] seems to point to the former; whereas the priority given to Ouranos in the Greek mythology Zeus being the grandson of Ouranos—and the fact that the Iranians, while clinging to Varuṇa, rejected Dyaus, and stigmatised all gods *(devas)* derived from it as demons, seem to point to the latter. Can anything be urged in favour of Varuṇa which may turn the scale? There are three things: (1) The moral elevation of character ascribed to him is far more lofty and divine than that ascribed to any other Vedic god;[20] (2) The ethical consciousness of sin manifested in the hymns addressed to Varuṇa is far more frequent and intense than that which is found in hymns addressed to Dyaus and later gods; (3) In proportion as we come down the stream of time from Varuṇa, we find the moral character of the gods deteriorating, and the ethical consciousness of sin growing weaker and weaker. These facts seem to turn the scale in favour of Varuṇa, and warrant the conclusion that he was the oldest historical god of the united Indo-European nations.

The primitive Āryans, however, in consequence of the cold climate in which they lived, had looked with profound interest on the *brilliant* aspect of the sky as the most pleasant and adorable, and gave expression to it in Dyaus. *Dyaushpitar,* therefore, was a formula fixed in their language before the separation of the Western branches from the Eastern. The Greeks and Latins, occupying a country, the climate of which resembled the one they had left, clung to *this aspect* of the Heaven-God, and made Zeus-Jupiter their supreme deity. The Hindu-Āryans on the other hand, living in the hot sultry plains of India, where the glow of heaven is oppressive and destructive, while its storms, thunder and rain are refreshing and fertilising, fixed on *this aspect* of the sky as the most beneficent and adorable; and embodied it in a new god, Indra, a name supposed to be derived from a root signifying

to "drop". Dyaus, therefore, before he grew strong and dramatic enough to supersede Varuṇa in India, was supplanted by Indra. But the Iranians, in consequence of some powerful spiritual influences with which they came in contact in Media, or thereabout,[21] clung to the abstract conception of Varuṇa and developed it into a personal spiritual Being, separate from nature, which they called *Asura,* Zend Ahura, a living spirit; an epithet in the Veda denoting chiefly the abstract conception of the Heaven-God. And the name Varuṇa, or *Varana,* remained with them, at first as expressing the material heaven only, and afterwards representing a mythical region, the seat of a fight between a storm god and a storm fiend.

The Vedas describe Varuṇa in the most exalted language. The sun is his eye, the heaven is his garment, and the resounding wind is his breath.[22] He stemmed asunder the wide firmament, he lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven, he stretched out, apart, the starry sky and the earth.[23] He opened wide paths for the sun, and hollowed out channels for the rivers.[24] He is king of all, and the "upholder of order" in the Universe which he has made.[25] His ordinances *(vratas),* resting on himself as a mountain, are fixed and unassailable. By their operation the moon walks in brightness, and the twinkling stars which appear at night vanish in the morning.[26] He has unbounded control over the calamities of mankind, and a thousand remedies to cure all diseases. He is beautiful in form, undecaying, un-conquerable, serene and immovable in the midst of turmoil and tempest; "the god whom the scoffers do not provoke, nor the tormentors of men, nor the plotters of mischief". He is full of hoiy strength, without deceit, enlightening the foolish, and leading his worshippers to wealth and happiness.[27]

High up in his empyrean realm, dwelling in a palace with a thousand gates, supported by a thousand columns, he

discerns the tracks of the birds that fly through the air, and the ships that plough the mighty deep.[28] He knows the twelve months, and the thirteenth, or "inter calary"; he is acquainted with the course of the winds, and with the bright and mighty divinities who reside on high.[29] To him the darkness shineth as the light, "for he sees what has been, and what will be done".[30] "If a man stands, or walks, or hides; if he goes to lie down or to get up; what two people sitting together whisper, King Varuṇa knows it, he is there as the third." "He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuṇa, the king. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth." "King Varuṇa sees what is be tween heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player throws the dice, he settles all things."[31]

Varuṇa is the governor of the moral world—the consciences of men. He has given laws which cannot be broken with impunity. His fatal "nooses stand spread out to catch the man who tells a lie"; but "they pass by him who tells the truth".[32] His wrath is terrible upon all who commit sin and disfigure his worship with imperfections."[33] Nevertheless, he is merciful to the offender. And hence man, trembling under the burden of sin, dares to approach Varuṇa and cry,

(1) "Let me not yet, O Varuṇa, enter into the house of clay; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

(2) "If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"[34]

(3) "Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone wrong; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

(4) "Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

(5) "Whenever we men, O Varuṇa, commit an offence before the heavenly host; whenever we break the law through thoughtlessness, punish us not, O God, for that offence!"[35]

However, the name Varuṇa may jar on our ears, there can be no doubt that to the ancient Āryans it was the most sublime expression of the Supreme Being, whose personality was now fading away from their mind, and heaven, the place of His abode, was addressed as Himself. This was not from a deep sense of contrition and unworthiness to call Him "Father," like the prodigal son when he cried, "I have sinned against heaven," but in consequence of the sinful tendency of man not to retain God in his memory. The Āryans were now in that mental and spiritual condition, aptly described by Colebrook, "recognising but one Supreme Deity, yet not sufficiently discriminating the creature from the Creator". "Father of heaven" in the sense of "God of heaven," or "Father of light" in the sense of "God is light," had become hazy and uncertain; and the attributes originally ascribed to Him were consequently transferred to Heaven, the place of His abode.

The physical, intellectual, and moral attributes of the Deity never shone so fully, brightly, and lovingly in any Āryan god as in Varuṇa. All subsequent gods are but dim reflections of him – as he was but a dim reflection of the Supreme – retaining in the Vedic Age his physical and intellectual character, but allowing his moral perfections gradually to grow dimmer and dimmer, until, at last, the moral character of the immortal gods could not be distinguished from that of mortal men.

Max Müller says, "The more we go back, the more we examine the earliest germs of any religion, the purer I believe we shall find the conceptions of the Deity". This is as strictly true of the religions of India as it is of all other ancient

religions. And this can hardly be accounted for, except on the supposition that man was originally endowed with divine knowledge far more than he appears to have possessed at the dawn of history. For had the Vedic Āryans emerged at any time, by their own exertion, from a low or savage strate, and gradually risen into the High conception of the Author of the Universe, which found expression in Varuṇa, we might reasonably expect that they would have retained the celestial Varuṇa as their Supreme Deity to the exclusion of all other rivals. Alas! the fact is the reverse. They not only deified the elements and forces of Nature with which they were surrounded, but hurled down the divine Varuṇa, "the omniscient spirit," from the throne of the Universe; placed him among inferior deities, called Ādityas; made him the twin-brother and chief associate of Mitra, the Persian Mithra, a form of the sun; and lastly relegated him to a dominion over the waters! But though Varuṇa was thus degraded and Indra raised to supreme power in his place, yet his former greatness occasionally breaks through, not only in the fact that Indra and other gods are said to obey and follow him,[36] but in the epithets applied to him and Mitra together, such as, "Lords of truth and light";[37] "Sapient gods";[38] "Universal monarchs";[39] "Ye whose imperishable divinity is the eldest"; "For these two are the living-spirits among the gods";[40] all the gods follow the ordinances of Mitra and Varuṇa;[41] "The man whom Varuṇa distinguishes for his knowledge, and Mitra and Aryaman protect, can never be slain".

Then, closely connected with the sky, is Aditi, immensity, from *diti,* a bond, and the negative prefix *a,* meaning the unbounded, the infinite expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, and beyond the firmament. Aditi at first was probably nothing more than an epithet of Dyaus, the sky *(dyauh aditih)*[42]—more especially of that part of the sky

whence the dawn comes forth every morning, and hence the dawn is called "the face of Aditi".[43] Mythology, however, soon dissected the Heaven-God into seven inferior deities, corresponding to the Vedic seven regions, or worlds,[44] to each of which a god must be allotted. This myth, the root of which we see in the sacredness attached to the number *seven,*[45] began to germinate before the Iranians and the Indians separated. In Iran it grew into the seven Amesha-Spentas, "the undying and well-doing ones," with Ahura-Mazda at their head; and in India into the seven Ādityas, "the infinite ones," with Varuṇa at their head. But its growth in India did not stop here. It was necessary to create a mother for the Ādityas, and so the epithet Aditi was raised to the rank of a goddess; and from being the mother of the bright Ādityas she easily glided into the mother of all gods, the common womb, or substratum of all existencies. "Aditi is the heaven; Aditi is the sky; Aditi is the mother, father, son; Aditi is all the gods; Aditi is the five classes of men; Aditi is whatever has been and whatever shall be."[46]

The names of the seven Ādityas vary. According to R.V., ii., 27, I, they are Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga,[47] Varuṇa, Dakṣa, Aṁśa; these and Aditi make seven. In another passage,'[48] Agni and Savitar are substituted for Dakṣa and Aṁśa; and in the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka, Dhātar and Indra occupy the places of Aditi and Dakṣha, and Vivasvāt, the sun, is mentioned as the eighth, which, if intended for *Marattanda,* was cast away, according to R.V., x., 72, 8.

No doubt physically these deities had something to do with solar movements. Probably they were personifications of the various appearances of Varuṇa, the sky, caused by the diurnal and annual movements of the sun. This, at any rate, is the explanation given of them at a later age; for we read in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa [49]; that the Ādityas represent the twelve months in the year.

And as the Ādityas *physically* are the diverse manifestations of Varuṇa, so they are *morally* the reflection of his character, and, in union with him, hold the same ethical relationship to man as he holds personally." They see the good man."[50] "They hate falsehood, forgive sins, preserve from evil spirits, bridge the paths to immortality, and uphold the heavens for the sake of the righteous."[51]

The names of these Ādityas, with the exception of Varuṇa, are remarkable as being abstract names of deities drawn from certain relations of moral and social life. The names of the other gods are chiefly taken from some prominent physical features, such as Dyaus, the "bright"; or from the activities of human life, such as Viśvakarman, the "maker of all things". But these names are the pure conceptions of the mind, in which the noblest relations of human intercourse are reflected. Mitra is the "friend," Aryaman the "bosom friend," Bhaga the "liberal," Dakṣa the "powerful" or the "capable," and Aṁsa the "apportioner" or "sympathiser". No wonder then that the cry of the weak, sorrowful, and distressed should ascend to them : "May I be conscious, Ādityas, of this your protection, the cause of happiness in danger; Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa, may I through your guidance escape the sins that are like pitfalls in my paths." [52] "Carry us, O Vasus, by your blessed protection, as it were in your ship, across all dangers."[53] "To our offspring, to our race, and thus to ourselves, make life longer to live! ye valiant Ādityas." "O Mitra, Aryaman, Varuṇa, and ye Winds, grant us an abode free from sin, full of men, glorious with three bars."[54]

Indra, the god of the watery atmosphere, of thunder and of lightning, the son of Dyu and Pṛthivi, of Puruṣa or Prajāpati,[55] holds the same relative position in the mythology of the Vedas as Zeus in that of Greece. The physical meaning

of Dyaus was too transparent for the crystallisation of myths, and the ethical character of Varuṇa was too divine for retention in the corrupt memory of man. But Indra furnished unlimited scope for the wild imagination of ancient Bards, stimulated by the most gorgeous scenery in the world, to paint in the choicest colours. Hence, he marks a period of decadence in the religious consciousness of the Vedic Āryans. His attributes are chiefly, but not exclusively, those of physical superiority rather than of spiritual elevation and moral grandeur. He has more to do with the affairs of the external world – with the temporal necessities and comforts of man – than with the spiritual aspirations and eternal realities with which Varuṇa is so prominently concerned. Indra is an omnipotent man, whereas Varuṇa is more like an omnipotent God. With the advent of Indra the ancient pastoral character of the Āryans changed, and the more spiritual elements of the ancient creed disappeared. The people now assumed the more active character of warriors and conquerors, and their religious conceptions became less ethical and more sensuous.

In their efforts to find suitable epithets to celebrate the greatness of Indra, the old Ṛṣis exhaust the language of the Vedas. He is the Supreme God, the architect of all thing's, surpassing in power all former generations of gods and creatures, daring in spirit, deriving his power from himself; the creator of the earth, the sky, the sun, moon and stars; the ruler of all things movable and immovable; the leader of gods; the lord of the lofty sky, the lord of the sacred assembly, the lord of the joy-inspiring Soma-juice, the lord of horses, of cattle, and of mansions. He is the primeval, most resplendent divinity; mighty, wise, true, holy, everlasting, swift, joyful, void of fear, loving glory, skilled in all science, shepherd of men, performer of a hundred sacrifices; the awful god, whose counsels not all the gods are able to frustrate. He is the cow

that produces the water of life, the great bull in the air, the being that stops the breath of life, that drives away disease and all hurtful and malicious foes. He is omniscient and omnipresent. He hears and sees all things *(viśvaṁ śṛṇoti paśyati)*.[56] "He is both just and merciful"; "he punishes and pardons. He hears prayer, and through faith in him the strong acquire spoils in the day of battle."[57] He surpasses heroes in his greatness; the earth and heaven suffice not for his girdle. He orders the earth to be his garment, and, god-like, wears the heaven as it were a gauntlet.[58] Still, with all these high attributes, he is reminded that he is not self-existent, but the son ot a mother. "When thou, Indra, like the dawn, didst fill both the worlds, a divine mother bore thee, the mighty monarch of mighty creatures—a gracious mother bore thee."[59]

His personal appearance represents the Āryan conception of a handsome man. He is large-bodied, with a beautiful countenance, prominent nose, good lips, handsome chin, flowing hair, red beard, long arms, large hands, and ten fingers pointing to happiness. His speech is as smooth and captivating as that of the god of eloquence. Richly adorned with ornaments, wearing a crown on his head and golden pendants in his ears, he rides on horses, and drives in a golden chariot drawn by two tawny steeds, snorting, neighing, and invincible, with golden manes, for he is both the "famed charioteer" and the "incomparable traveller."[60]

The most prominent epithets applied to him are, "wielder of the thunderbolt," "the slayer of Vṛtra," "the slayer of the Dasyus," and "the drinker of Soma".

As the dispenser of rain, he is the "wielder of the thunderbolt," and the "slayer of Vṛtra". Vṛtra, or Ahi, is the rainless sky conceived of as a demon, the enemy of man, who has stolen the cows, or the clouds, and shut them up in dark caves near the uttermost ends of the sky, where they

cannot discharge their udders of fertilising milk upon the parched and thirsty earth. Then the pious worshipper implores Indra to release them, and slay the demon who had carried them away. Thereupon Indra, guided by his faithful dog Saramā, and accompanied by the Maruts, or storm-gods, goes after them; and no sooner does he hear their lowing from afar than the battle begins. The iron thunderbolt – the product of Tvāṣṭṛi – is hurled, the Maruts roar, the demon is slain, and the cows are released to discharge their heavy udders in great drops upon the earth. Then the singers "bring their praises to heroic Indra, as cows come home to the milker". In this respect he is like Parjanya, the Lithuanian Perkunas, the god of thunder and rain, the generator and nourisher of plants and all living creatures.[61] At other times he is the bright god of day, whose steed is the sun, and whose cows are the first rays of the dawn, dispelling the darkness of the night, and filling the world with light and joy; and, therefore, he is called the" lighter up of nights, and the parent of the sun".[62]

The Dasyus were both the aboriginal inhabitants of India, who resisted the Āryans in their progress from the Indus to the Ganges, and the demons of darkness and drought, the enemies of the bright gods, such as Vṛtra, Namuci, Śambara, Ahi, and others. Indra was now the supreme god of the conquering race, and hence is constantly invoked to kill the Dasyus, their enemies, and the despiser of himself, *Anindra*. "Armed with the lightning, and trusting in his strength, he moved about shattering the cities of the Dasyus." "Indra, thunderer, who art wise, hurl thy shaft against the Dasyus, and increase the might and glory of the Āryans."[63] "Slaying the Dasyus, he protected the Āryan colour."[64]

Soma, the Persian *Haoma* of which Indra drank so copiously, and which all the immortal gods loved so well,

was the juice of a creeper called the moon-plant *(Asclepias acida),* expressed in a mortar or between stones, strained through a goat's-hair sieve into clarified butter, diluted with water, mixed with barley-meal, and fermented in a jar for nine days. It was then a strong intoxicating liquor, producing exhilaration or stupor, according to the quantity drunk. No sooner did the Āryans discover that it had this effect upon themselves, than they invited the gods to partake of it, in order to help them to perform their mighty deeds, and to refresh them when exhausted and cast down. For whatever they found pleasant and useful to themselves, they conceived to be equally so to the gods; thus exemplifying the dictum of Heraclitus : "Men are mortal gods, and gods are immortal men". "Ye priests, bring hither Soma for Indra; pour from the bowls the delicious food! The hero truly always loves to drink of it; sacrifice to the strong, for he,desires it!" "Ye priests, he who struck down Vṛitra, when he hid the waters, as a tree is struck by lightning—to him who desires this Soma, offer it; for that Indra desires to drink it!"[65] "I declare the mighty deeds of this mighty one. At the *Trikadruka* festival, Indra drank of the Soma, and in its exhilaration he slew Ahi. He propped up the vast sky in empty space; he hath filled the two worlds and the atmosphere.[66] He hath upheld the earth and stretched it out. Indra has done all these things in the exhilaration of the Soma."[67]

Soma finally was deified, and all the divine attributes ascribed to the other gods were ascribed to him. He became the creator of all things, father of the gods, the rainer of blessings, and the saviour of men from sin, as well as "the embroiler of all things in his drunken frolics". The Sāma-Veda says of this god, that he submits to mortal birth, and is "bruised and afflicted that others may be saved". This is the

rudest type of mediation through sacrifice, of strength through weakness, of life through death.[68]

Viṣṇu, a name of the sun,[69] from *viṣ,* to pervade, is the faithful friend and companion of Indra, both in his drinking bouts and in his conflicts with Vṛtra. "Yea, even when all the gods had forsaken him, faithful Viṣṇu came to his help."[70] Vāyu, the god of the gentle breezes, is also in his train. "He drives a thousand steeds; his breath chases away the demons; he comes in the earliest morning, as the first breath of air that stirs itself at daybreak, to join Indra in drinking the Soma; and the auroras weave for him shining garments." But the Maruts, or Rudras, storm-gods, are pre-eminently the constant allies and companions of Indra. They are the sons of Rudra, the god of the roaring tempest, and Pṛśni. "They ride on spotted stags (the clouds), wear shining armour, and carry spears in their hands; no one knows whence they come nor whither they go;[71] their voice is heard aloud, as they come rushing on, the earth trembles and the mountains shake before them."[72] But though they are exceedingly tumultuous they are none the less beneficent. They dispense rain in abundance from the udder of their mother, Pṛśni, and having acquired the knowledge of remedies from their father, Rudra, they are ever ready to help the sick and succour the afflicted.

The following hymn to the Maruts and Indra is from Max Müller's translation of the Ṛg-Veda Saṁhitā, p. 163.

HYMN TO THE MARUTS AND INDRA

THE PROLOGUE

The sacrifices speaks:—

1. With what splendour are the Maruts all equally endowed, they who are of the same age, and dwell in the same house? With what thoughts? From whence are they come?

Do these heroes sing forth their (own) strength because they wish for wealth?

2. Whose prayers have the youths accepted? Who has turned the Maruts to his own sacrifice? By what strong devotion may we delight them, they who float through the air like hawks?

THE DIALOGUE

The Maruts speak:–

3. From whence, O Indra, dost thou come alone, thou who art mighty? O lord of men! what has thus happened to thee? Thou greetest (us) when thou comest together with (us) the bright (Maruts). Tell us, then, thou with thy bay horses, what thou hast against us.

Indra speaks:–

4. The sacred songs are mine, (mine are) the prayers; sweet are the libations! My strength rises, my thunderbolt is hurled forth. They call for me, the prayers yearn for me. Here are my horses, they carry me towards them.

The Maruts speak:–

5. Therefore, in company with our strong friend, having adorned our bodies, we now harness our fallow deer with all our might; for Indra, according to thy custom, thou hast been with us.

Indra speaks:–

6. Where, O Maruts, was that custom of yours that you should join me who am alone in the killing of Ahi? I indeed am terrible, strong, powerful; I escape from the blows of every enemy.

The Maruts speak:–

7. Thou hast achieved much with us as companions. With the same valour, O hero! let us achieve then many things, O thou most powerful, O Indra! whatever we, Maruts, wish with our heart.

Indra speaks :–

8. I slew Vṛtra, O Maruts, with (Indra's) might having grown strong through my own vigour; I who hold the thunderbolt in my arms, I have made these all-brilliant waters to flow freely for man.

The Maruts speak :–

9. Nothing, O powerful lord, is strong before thee; no one is known among the gods like unto thee. No one who is now born will come near, no one who has been born. Do what has to be done, thou who art grown so strong.

Indra speaks :–

10. Almighty power be mine alone, whatever I may do, daring in my heart; for I in deed, O Maruts, am known as terrible; of all that I threw down, I, Indra, am the lord.

11. O Maruts, now your praise has pleased me, the glorious hymn which you have made for me, ye men! for me, for Indra, for the powerful hero, as friends for a friend, for your own sake and by your own efforts.

12. Truly, there they are, shining towards me, assuming blameless glory, assuming vigour. O Maruts, wherever I have looked for you, you have appeared to me in bright splendour : appear to me also now.

THE EPILOGUE

The sacrificer speaks :-–

13. Who has magnified you here, O Maruts? Come hither, O friends, towards your friends. Ye brilliant Maruts, cherish these prayers, and be mindful of these my rites.

14. The wisdom of Manya has brought us to this, that he should help, as the poet helps the performer of a sacrifice:

bring (them) hither quickly, Maruts, on to the Sage! these prayers the singer has recited for you.

15. This your praise, O Maruts, this your song conges from Māndārya, the son of Mana, the poet. Come hither with rain! May we find for ourselves offspring, food, and a camp with running water.[73]

In verses 5 to 8 of this dialogue we see traces of rivalry between Indra and the Maruts. They were not always friendly, and their respective votaries disputed their relative claims to adoration. Agastya seems to have been the means of reconciling them and of engrafting the worship of the Maruts on that of Indra.[74] The remaining verses, therefore, show that a complete reconciliation had been effected between them.

The Maruts are called *Viśve-devaḥ adruhaḥ,* all gods, devoid of guile;[75] and are said to have been raised to the sphere of the immortals in consequence of their association with Indra.

There are some passages in the Veda in which grave doubts are expressed as to the existence of Indra. Thus we read, "Offer praise to Indra if you desire booty; true praise if he truly exists". One and another says, "There is no Indra". "Who has seen him?" "Whom shall we praise?"

Then Indra answers through the poet, "Here I am, O worshipper; behold me here". "In might I overcome all creatures."[76] Again, "The terrible one of whom they ask where he is, and of whom they say that he is not, he takes away the riches of his enemy like the stakes at a game. Believe in him, ye men, for he is indeed Indra."[77]

The whole hymn, from which the last verse is taken appears to be a polemical assertion of the existence and greatness of Indra against gainsayers. Some may regard the doubts expressed respecting the existence of Indra as a

necessary stage in the "upward progress of the human mind" through polytheism to monotheism. This doubtless is true as a general law, but it can scarcely be applied to this case, for on that supposition should we not expect to see the existence of other gods doubted? No such doubts, however, appear in the Ṛg-Veda respecting the existence of other gods. The explanation therefore must be sought in the fact that Indra was triumphantly superseding Varuṇa in the cultus; and, consequently, the most devout Ṛṣis, unable to look on passively when the nation was transferring its allegiance from the old to the new god, endeavoured to stem the torrent by casting doubts on his existence. They would have had no objection to admit Indra to their pantheon as a god; but their reverence for Varuṇa, hallowed by immemorial traditions, was far too strong to permit them to regard him as supreme. Who cannot sympathise with them? For had not Varuṇa been worshipped in the ancestral home before the family broke up never to be reunited again? Had not their forefathers offered sacrifices to Varuṇa and supplicated him with hymns, which, in accents of adoration, remind us of the Psalms of David? With the pious, Varuṇa was still the god that went down to the depth of the conscience, that sympathised with their struggles after a higher and holier life, that best satisfied the cravings of their spiritual nature. And with such, Varuṇa remained the supreme god for a long time, even after Indra, by a hard struggle, had superseded him in the public cultus.[78] The small number of hymns addressed to Varuṇa, preserved in the Ṛg-Veda, shows clearly what a small space he occupied in the thoughts of the majority; and that space becomes more contracted as we read on towards the end – the last Maṇḍala, or Book, not containing one hymn addressed to him *alone!* The few hymns addressed to him, however, surpass all others in elevation of sentiment, in contrition for sin, and in

hungerings and thirstings after forgiveness and communion with the Supreme.

Agni, from *Ag,* "to move," the Latin *Ignis,* and the Sclavonian *Ogni,* is a deification of fire in its threefold manifestations, —as the sun in the heaven, as lightning in the atmosphere, and as fire on the hearth and the altar. He is the son of Dyaus, the sky, because originally the offspring of heaven. He is "the son of strength, neighing like a horse when he steps out of his strong prison, and, grasping food with his jaws, he devours the wood, surrounding his path with darkness, and sweeping his tail in the wind, as, in the smoke column, he ascends to heaven". He is the light of the sacrifice, whether reminding man that the time for the morning sacrifice has come, or himself lighting the sacrifice on the altar. In one place he is said to have been brought down from the lofty firmament by Ṛṣi Atharvan; in another, by Ṛṣ i Divodasa; in a third, it is said that he was brought forth by the songs of the old poet Gopavana; and in a fourth, that both he and Indra were produced from the mouth of Puruṣa. Most frequently, however, his production is ascribed to the strong rubbing of the *araṇis,* or two dry pieces of wood, the ordinary mode of kindling fire among all primitive nations. His birth is celebrated in the hymns in the most glowing figurative language as the greatest wonder in the Universe. The ten fingers of the kindler are ten virgins who bring him to birth; the two pieces of wood are his mothers, in whose laps he rapidly grows, and whom he then devours as they lie prostrate on the earth.[79]

Agni is a "god among gods". "His greatness surpasses the vast sky." "No god is beyond his might, the mighty one." He sees all things and knows all secrets among mortals.[80] He is the lord, the wise king, the sage, the father, the brother, the son, and the friend of men; present with all, dwelling in their houses, guarding them at night from the demons of

darkness. He is the youngest of the gods, their messenger[81] and invoker on behalf of men, "going wisely between heaven and earth, gods and men, like a friendly messenger between two hamlets". He carries the sacrifices to the gods, and brings the gods down to the sacrifices. He is both[82] Bṛhaspati, the Purhohita, or mediating priest, between god and man, and Brahmanaspati, the lord of prayer; because he not only hears the prayers of the suppliant, but causes the gods also to hear them. His golden colour, bright face, white hair, green moustachios, eyes fixed on many regions, and voice like the Maruts, are dwelt upon with special delight.[83] With a crown of glory on his head, he travels in a brilliant car drawn sometimes by two red horses and sometimes by two black or ruddy. He is compared to a stallion, and is called a strong bull, a red hero, a poet with a bright tongue, the mouth of the gods, the producer of the three Vedas, the ordainer of sacrifice, the giver of wealth, intelligence, and all happiness. He is a kind of *anima mundi,* a subtle principle, that pervades all nature, through which plants, animals and men are capable of reproduction. He is one of the most prominent deities of the Ṛg-Veda, because he is the product of sacerdotalism. The hymns addressed to him are more numerous than those addressed to any other deity except Indra, and eight out of the ten Maṇḍalas of the Ṛg-Veda begin with hymns to him. Among his frequent appellations are, "belonging to all men," "bearer of the offering," "all-possessing," "purifier," and "demon slayer".[84]

In Agni we see unfolding themselves the germs of the two great ideas so natural to man—the former of which assumed such enormous proportions in later Hinduism —viz., Incarnation and mediation. Agni was a Purhohita, or High Priest between God and man, who partook of the nature of both. He was a god dwelling on high among the immortals,

and yet he condescended to sit in the humble habitation of men. "Agni, beloved by many, praised by all, in whose immortal fire all men cause the offering to blaze, is this morning our guest." "By words and hymns of praise, uttered with all my might, do I praise thee, Agni, the guest of my sacrifice." "We approach the foe-destroying, ancient *incarnate Agni,* who shone forth most illustriously in the form of Srutavana, the son of Arkṣa." [85] "Kindled Agni, by this adoration do thou recommend us to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Indra. Whatever sin we may have committed, do thou expiate; and may Aryaman, Aditi, and Mitra remove it from us.[86] "O Agni, in thy friendship I am at home.":[87]

Sūrya, the sun, notwithstanding his identification with Agni, was worshipped as a separate personality, under different names corresponding to its various functions or appearances, such as Sāvitri, enlivener; Pūṣan, nourisher; Mitra, friend, the bright sun of the morning or the day; Viṣṇu, the sun, as striding with three steps across the sky; Aryaman, Bhaga, Āditya; and the great attributes ascribed to the other gods are ascribed to him also. According to Yāska, a very ancient etymologist, there are only three Vedic gods, viz. : Agni, whose place is on the earth; Indra or Vāyu, whose place is in the atmosphere; and Sūrya, whose place is in the sky. All the other gods are resolvable into these, and these again into one. This, however, is a generalisation posterior to the Vedic Age. Sūrya, though the child of heaven and earth, is also their creator, and even "the divine leader of the gods"[88] The dawn is both his wife and his daughter,[89] and as she is also the daughter of the sky, she might be spoken of as his sister. Indra. again, is represented as having given birth to the dawn and the sun. And from another point of view, the dawn is represented as having given birth to the sun.[90] Sūrya travels in a golden chariot; along his ancient upward and downward paths, the paths without

dust," drawn by one, or seven, ruddy steeds (the seven days of the week), preceded by the dawn, destroying darkness, and penetrating with his piercing glance the active world and the ethereal sky.

Sūrya, as the eye of the all-embracing Varuṇa, appears fo have occupied a very high place in the ancient creed of the Āryans. For the Iranians not only worshipped him as an emblem of the Supreme, but in the older parts of the Brāhmaṇas – to which the Avesta is related in age and contents – he is often exalted above the other deities *(prasavita devanani)*. We are told in the Taittirīya and Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇas that the Devas (Hindus) and Āsuras (Persians) disputed about Aditya (Sun), and that the Devas won him. He is still adored by the Parsees, the descendants of the Persians, as the purest symbol of the Supreme, and by the Brahmanical Hindus as the most resplendent manifestation of Him who is infinitely beyond human ken. To him the Gāyatrī is addressed, and before him millions of pious Hindus bow in adoration every morning. The following translation by Monier Williams of Hymn i., 50, in the Ṛg-Veda, is a beautiful description of the sun :

"Behold the rays of Dawn, like heralds, lead on high

"The Sun, that men may see the great all-knowing God.

"The stars slink off like thieves, in company with Night,

"Before the all-seeing eye whose beams reveal his presence,

"Gleaming like brilliant flames, to nation after nation.

"With speed beyond the ken of mortals, thou, O Sun,

"Dost ever travel on conspicuous to all.

"Thou dost create the light, and with it dost illume.

"The Universe entire; thou risest in the sight of all the race of men, and all the host of heaven.

"Light-giving Varuṇa! thy piercing glance can scan
"In quick succession all this stirring, active world,
"And penetrateth too the broad ethereal space,
"Measuring our days and nights, and spying out all creatures.
"Sūrya, with flaming locks, clear-sighted god of day,
"Thy seven ruddy mares bear on thy rushing car
"With these thy self-yoked steeds, seven daughters of thy chariot.
"Onward thou dost advance. To thy refulgent orb
"Beyond this lower gloom and upwards to the light
"Would we ascend, O Sun, thou god among the gods."

Invocations to the stars and the night are not frequent in the Vedas, and the worship of Candramās, the moon, is not prominent; but Uṣas, the Dawn,[91] and the, Aśvins,[92] her precursive rays,[93] are objects of great celebration. The Aśvins are ever young, handsome, and swift as young falcons.[94] Travelling in a three-wheeled triangular car, made by the *Ṛibhus,* and drawn by asses, they bestow rich benefits on their worshippers, and help them to overcome their enemies[95] They are called *Dasras,* destroyers, either of foes or diseases; for they are the skilful physicians of gods as well as men, and as such are *Nasatyas,* never untrue, but always faithful. In the Legends they are represented as having effected such wonderful cures as to cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, the old to become young, and the distressed happy.[96] It is supposed that in the myths of the Aśvins two distinct elements are blended, viz., the cosmical and the historical, the former representing the mysteriousness of the phenomena of light, and the latter the healing art of remote antiquity.

The following hymn to the Dawn is considered by Max Müller a fair specimen of the original, simple poetry of the

Veda. "It has no reference to any sacrifice, it contains no technical expressions; but it is the simple utterance in metre of the feelings of an oriental, who has watched the approach of the Dawn with mingled delight and awe." It also shows the treacherousness of poetical language; how easily it leads from *devi* the bright, an epithet of the dawn, to devi the goddess, the daughter of the sky, Dyaus[97] *(duhitra divaḥ)*.

"She shines before us like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work. The fire had to be kindled by men; she brought light by striking down darkness.

"She rose up, spreading far and wide, and moving towards every one. She grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of the cows (the morning clouds), the leader of the days, she shone gold-coloured, lovely to behold.

"She, the fortunate, she who brings the eye of the god, who leads the white and lovely steed (of the sun), the Dawn was seen, revealed by her rays, with brilliant treasures she follows every one.

"Thou who art a blessing where thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly; make the pastures wide, give us safety! Remove the haters, bring treasures! Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn!

"Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us food, who givest us wealth in cows, horses and chariots!

"Thou daughter of the sky, thou high-born Dawn, whom the Vasiṣṭhas magnify with songs, give us riches high and wide; all ye gods, protect us always with your blessings!"[98]

The mountains, rivers, trees, and plants are invoked as so many high powers.[99] "May the mountains, the waters, the generous plants and the heavens; may the earth with the trees, and the two worlds, protect us!" "May the highly-

praised mountains and the shining rivers shield us!"[100] The animals which surround man, the horse by which he is borne to battle, the cow which supplies him whith nourishment, the dog which guards his dwelling, the frogs which croak in the replenished pool, the bird which by its cry reveals to him his future, as well as the numerous classes of creatures which threaten his existence, receive from him the worship of either honour or deprecation. The Pitṛs, spirits of departed ancestors, the Ṛibus (Greek Orpheus), the deified artisans of the gods; Yama, the god of Hades, and his two terrific dogs which guard the entrance to immortality; the sacrificial victims and utensils, bows, arrows, axes, and drums, are all invoked. In short, whatever excited the sentiments of pain or pleasure, joy or sadness, confidence or apprehension, found a niche in the Vedic Pantheon.

Goddesses do not occupy very prominent positions in the songs of the Ṛṣis. Pṛthivi,[101] the wife of Dyaus, Aditi, and Uṣas; Sarasvatī and Sindhu, which are both goddesses and rivers; Gaṇgā, Sinivali, and Rākā, goddesses who preside at procreation and birth, are invoked. Varuṇāni, Indrāṇi, Agnāyi, Aśvinī, and Rudrasī, the wives of the great gods Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Aśvins, and of Rudra respectively, are only mentioned. There are no particular functions assigned to them, and they do not occupy positions at all corresponding to the high rank of their husbands. It should be mentioned to the credit of the Vedic Ṛṣis, that they pass over with delicate hints those myths relating to the amours and marriages of the gods, which must have formed the basis of a great many representations in the Hymns. In this they contrast favourably with the authors of the Brāhmaṇas, and especially with those of the Epic Poems and Purāṇas, in which the amours of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, Śiva and Pārvatī are described in the most voluptuous terms. Some portions

of the Hymns, however, are not fit for translation.

(b) Metaphysical Gods

As the preceding class contains the "former" gods, the gods of Poetry, so this class contains the "latter," the gods of philosophy. Unlike the "former," these do not appeal to the senses; there is nothing in nature corresponding to them; they are the pure creation of the human mind, the result of abstraction and generalisation.

The human mind is swayed by two imperious tendencies, – the one impels it, to connect effects with their causes; the other, to carry up its knowledge into unity. Both tendencies, if not identical in their origin, coincide in their result; for in proportion as we ascend from cause to cause, the nearer we approach to absolute unity.

With regard to the second tendency, the tendency to generalise and unify our knowledge, Sir William Hamilton says, "This tendency is one of the most prominent characteristics of the human mind. It, in part, originates in the imbecility of our faculties. We are lost in the multitude of the objects presented to our imagination, and it is only by assorting them in classes that we can reduce the infinity of nature to the finitude of mind. The conscious *ego,* the conscious self, by its nature one, seems also constrained to require that unity by which it is distinguished, in everything which it receives, and in everything which it produces ..." *e.g.,* "We are conscious of a scene presented to our senses only by uniting its parts into a perceived whole. Perception is thus a unifying act. The imagination cannot represent an object without uniting, in a single combination, the various elements of which it is composed. Generalisation is only the apprehension of the one in the many, and language is little else than a registry of the factitious unities of thought. The judgment cannot affirm or deny one notion of another, except by uniting

the two in one indivisible act of comparison. Syllogism is simply the union of two judgments in a third. Reason, Intellect, in fine, concatenating thoughts and objects into system; and, tending always from particular facts to general laws, from general laws to universal principles, is never satisfied in its ascent till it comprehend (which, however, it can never do) all laws in a single formula, and consummate all conditional knowledge in the unity of unconditional existence. Nor is it only in science that the mind desiderates the one. We seek it equally in works of art." "Hence the mind," says Anaxagoras, "only knows when it subdues its objects, when it reduces the many to the one;" and "The end of Philosophy," says Plato, "is the intuition of unity".[102]

In obedience to this imperious tendency of the mind to generalise its knowledge, the Vedic Āryans began at a very early period to abstract and classify the gods. They divided them into three classes of (at first) equal number, and assigned to them three separate localities for their abode.[103] They then joined together the names of two gods, sharing certain functions in common, and formed a compound with a dual termination, which compound they invoked as a new deity, such as Dyāvāpṛthivi, Mitravaruṇa, and Indravāyu. They also grouped the gods together under a common name, Viśvadevas, the all-gods, and addressed prayers and praises to them in their collective capacity. Advancing a step further in their generalisation, they perceived that many gods, having sprung from the same source, had a great many, attributes and functions in common. They suspected, therefore, that their essence, or what underlies them, is one and the same, though variously named. "They call him (the sun) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni; then he is the well-winged heavenly Garutmāt; that which is one, the wise call it many ways; they call it Agni, Yama, Mātarisvan."[104] Again, "Wise poets make

the beautiful winged, though he is one, manifold by words".[105] The same sentiment is found among the wise men of always hail to thee, Zeus. And Maximus Tyrius says, "Men make distinctions between the gods. They are not aware that all the gods have one law, one life, the same ways, not diverse, not mutually hostile; all rule; all are of the same age; all pursue our good; all have the same dignity and authority; all are immortal; one their nature, under many names."[106] Seneca utters the same sentiment in the words, "Omnia ejusdem Dei nomina, varie utentis suā potestate". All names of one and the same god, as diversely using his power.[107]

One poet openly declares that the Ṛṣis did not know God, and that all their songs are "idle talk".[108] "He who is our Father and Generator, who, as Disposer, knows all rites and worlds, who is the one assigner of names to the gods, to him have all other worlds recourse as the solution and end of all questions."[109] "That which is beyond the earth and sky, beyond gods and spirits : what earliest embryo did the waters hold, in which all the gods were assembled? Ye know not Him who produced these things. Something else is within you (polytheism). The chanters of hymns go about enveloped in mist, and unsatisfied with 'idle talk'."[110] Another says, "Knowing nothing myself, I ask the Seers here who know, that I may learn. He who established the six worlds is that one which exists in the form of the unborn Being."[111]

A higher flight of abstraction we find in Skamba, the supporter; Viśvakarman, the maker of all things; Prajāpati, the lord of creatures. Skamba is an expression of the abstract conception of the power which supports the world; and both Viśvakarman and Prajāpati were epithets of the sun *(Sūrya)*[112] before they were raised into independent deities. Neither of these, however, was destined to realise either the highest abstraction of Religion, or the highest abstraction of Philosophy.

At last an old sage flashed forth a few thoughts – whether as a reminiscence or as the guess of genius – which, by reflection, ought to have led to the recognition of one Supreme Being separate from nature. Musing on the beginning of all things, he goes back to the nothing which preceded the works of creation, and says, "There was then neither nonentity (*asad*) nor entity (*sad*); there was no atmosphere nor sky above. Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night. 'That One' *(tad ekam)* breathed calmly self-supported; there was nothing different from, or above It. Desire first rose in It, which was the primal germ of mind, and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discerned in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with nonentity."[113]

Here the existence of one self-existent Being is boldly asserted. He existed before creation. He existed, not as a great principle or an omnipresent power, but as a sentient Being, having a "desire" or "will"; by which "desire" or "will" "entity" was produced from "nonentity," the world from the dark unfathomable abyss.

This is the nearest approach to monotheism perhaps in the whole Vedas; – the highest goal reached by the Āryan mind. It seems strange, from the position of those who try to account for the conception of God on natural grounds alone, that, possessing such ideas, and knowing the attributes of the Infinite (as evidenced by the description of the physical gods), the old bards did not go further, and grasp the idea of God in all its fulness. But it was not to be. It seems to be always the fate of the Hindu thinker, that he no sooner abstracts the idea of God from natural phenomena, than he loses sight of, nature altogether, and merges all in God! He carries his love of unity into its highest fruition, to the absolute identity of the *ego* and the *non-ego,* mind and matter, subject and object,

the Creator and the creation, God and, the Universe. Hence polytheism and ideal pantheism are two the earliest times, have run parallel in India. As it was in the Vedic age, so it is now. Polytheism is the religion of the ignorant multitude, and ideal Pantheism is the religion of the thoughtful few.

We meet again with the idea represented by the demonstrative "That," but without the embodied "One" of the hymn, as an expression of the higher abstraction of Philosophy, viz., Monism, or the unity of thought. Before reaching that, however, the Hindu mind had to travel through the intricate labyrinth of two conceptions, different in their origin, which, after running parallel for a time, became united under the appellation "That". These two conceptions are (i) Ātman, and (ii) Brahma.

(i) Ātman, from *ah,* to breathe, means life, soul, spirit, self, of *ego*, both individual and universal. "Increase, O bright Indra! this our manifold food, by which, O Hero, thou givest us life (*Tman*) like sap,[114] to move everywher."[115] Here *Tman*, another form of *Ātman*, means life, particularly animal life. In a hymn addressed to the horse which is about to be sacrificed, it is said, "Let not thy dear self (*priya ātman*) burn or afflict thee as thou approachest the sacrifice". Here *priya ātma* is used as the reflexive pronoun "thyself," denoting personality.[116] Perceiving that the true principle of life is not the body or the outward form, but the preath or the spirit within, the ancient Āryans concluded that the world, also, is the body or the outward form of a breath, a soul, or a self within, which is its life.[117] "Who has seen the first-born, when he who has no bones *(i.e.,* form) bare him who had bones? Where was the life, the blood, the soul (self) of the world? Who went to ask this from any man that knew it?"[118] Here the soul, the Ātman, of the world can only mean that self-existent, free, independent spirit, which, though the

Ṛṣis did not grasp it, is the life of all lives, and the moving power of all things. In this sense the sun is metaphorically said to be "the soul of all that moves and rests";[119] and likewise is the wind *(Vāta)* "the soul of all the gods and source of the world" *(ātma devanam bhuvanasya garbha)*.[120]

This idea of the Soul, or Self, of the world developed in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads until it absorbed all other ideas and existencies, – until it was regarded as the only real entity. "In the beginning this (world) was Self alone; there was nothing else winking. He thought, Let me create the worlds, and he created the worlds."[121] "As the web issues from the spider; as little sparks proceed from fire; so from the one Soul proceed all breathing animals, all worlds, all the gods, and all beings."[122] " Being in this world, we may know the Supreme Spirit; if there be ignorance of Him then complete death ensues; those who know Him become immortal."[123] "Soul is the lord and king of all; as the spokes in the nave, so all worlds and souls are fastened in the one Soul."[124] "When a person regards his own soul as truly god, as the lord of what was and is to be, then he does not wish to conceal himself from that Soul." "That Soul the gods adore as the light of lights, and as the immortal."[125] "As flowing rivers are resolved into the sea, losing their names and forms, so the wise, freed from name and form, pass into the Divine Spirit, which is greater than the great. He who knows that Supreme Spirit becomes spirit."[126] "That divine Self is not to be grasped by tradition, nor by understanding, nor by all revelation. He whom the Self chooses, by him alone is the Self to be grasped." "That Self chooses him as his own."[127] "Sages, endowed with meditation and intuition, saw the power of the Divine Self, concealed by his own qualities."[128] In the Bṛhadaryaṇaka Upaniṣad[129] the sage Yājñavalkya tells his favourite wife Maitreyī, who desires to

become immortal, that immortality consists in perceiving the Divine Spirit, Ātma, the absolute Self, as the only existence.

"Whosoever looks for the Brahman class elsewhere than in the Self, should be abandoned by the Brahman class. Whosoever looks for the Kṣhatriya class elsewhere than in the Self, should be abandoned by the Kṣatriya class. Whosoever looks for the worlds elsewhere than in the Self, should be abandoned by the worlds. Whosoever looks for the Devas elsewhere than in the Self, should be abandoned by the Devas. Whosoever looks for creatures elsewhere than in the Self, should be abandoned by the creatures. Whosoever looks for everything elsewhere than in the Self, should be abandoned by everything. This Brahman class, this Kṣatriya class, these worlds, these Devas, these creatures, this everything, all is that Self."

"As all waters find their centre in the sea, all touches in the skin, all tastes in the tongue, all smells in the nose, all colours in the eye, all sounds in the ear, all percepts in the mind, all knowledge in the heart, all actions in the hands, all movements in the feet, and all the Vedas in speech. As a lump of salt, when thrown into water, becomes dissolved into water, and could not be taken out again, but wherever we taste the water it is salt; thus verily, O Maitreyī, does this great Being, endless, unlimited, consisting of nothing but knowledge, rise from out these elements, and vanish again into them. When he has departed, there is no more knowledge, I say, O Maitreyī!" Thus spoke Yājñavalkya.

Then Maitreyī said, "Here thou hast bewildered me, sir, when thou sayest that, having departed, there is no more knowledge".

But Yājñavalkya replied, "O Maitreyī, I have said nothing that is bewildering. This is enough, O beloved, for wisdom."

"For when there is, as it were, duality, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one hears the other, one salutes the other, one perceives the other, one knows the other; but when the Self only is all this, how should he smell nother, how should he see another, how should he hear another, how should he salute another, how should he perceive another, how should he know another? How should he know him by whom he knows all this? How, O beloved, should he know (himself) the knower?"

"The aspirant must learn the falsity of plurality, the fictitious nature of duality in experience, and the sole reality of the super-sensible and unitary self. He must crush every sense, and suppress every thought, that his mind may become a mirror to reflect the pure, characterless being, thought and bliss."[130]

(II) Brahma—In the Ṛg-Veda Brahma, from a root signifying force, wish, or will, means prayer, or sacred fext, because a subtle influence was supposed to accompany the utterance of a sacred formula, sufficiently strong to bend the gods, and make the act of sacrifice effectual.[131] And Brahman in the masculine means, "he of prayer," the man who utters prayers, the priest, and gradually the Brahman by profession.[132] "Come, Indra, let us make prayers *(brahmāni)* which magnify thee." "A new prayer *(brāhma navya)* has been made for thee."[133] "The prayer *(brāhma)* is my protecting armour."[134] Vāk, the goddess of speech, says : "I myself make known this, which is agreeable both to gods and men. Him whom I love I make terrible, I make him a priest"[135] *(brahmānam)*. "Indra is a priest" *(brahmā)*. "He it is whom they call a Ṛṣi, a priest, a pious sacrificer *(ṛṣiṁ brahmnānam yajñanyam)*."[136] Agni in R.V., vi., 16, is called "Brahmanaskave, which is explained *mantrasya śabdayitar,* "sounder or articulator of prayer." "The priests *(brahmanaḥ)* magnify

Indra by their praise." Brahma in the sense of a god does not, appear inthe Ṛg, the oldest Veda; but in the Atharva, the most recent, he is spoken of as a god" who dwells in the highest place, whose measure is the earth, whose belly is the atmosphere, whose head is the sky, and who is worthy of all reverence.[137] In the Brāhmaṇas, he is more fully developed, and is spoken of as the "first-born," the "self-existent," the "creator of heaven and earth," and the "best of the gods".[138]

No wonder that the ancient Hindus, who were so impressed with mysterious powers everywhere, deified the power of prayer. They had already deified the Soma juice, in consequence of its stimulating effect, enabling men to do work beyond their natural strength. And now that they had unwavering faith in the almighty power of prayer, "to bend" the most intractable of the gods to grant whatever boon they asked, what was more natural than that they should deify it? What was more natural than to conclude that the power which controlled the gods, and the channel through which all blessings flowed to themselves, must be above all other powers, must in fact be "That One" who is above and beyond all existences?

Agni was before called Brahmanaspati, the "Lord of prayer," in two senses : he was the hearer of prayer as a god, and the presenter of prayer to the gods as mediator or High Priest. In the deification of prayer, Brahmanaspati disappeared. His function as the hearer of prayer was transferred to prayer personified *(brahma),* and his function as a High Priest or mediator was transferred to the Brahmans, the utterers of prayer. This was the origin of both the god Brahma, which now holds the first place in the Hindu triad, and the Brahman caste, which has ruled India with a rod of iron for twenty-six centuries at least! What an awful degradation of religion to substitute the cold, unfeeling, metaphysical god, Brahma, for

the bright, humane sympathetic Agni, the" father, brother, and friend of all"; and to exchange the haughty disdainful Brahman, who considers himself defiled by contact with any one below himself in the social scale, for the High Priest who, though god, condescended to be the "guest of every one," smiling on all without distinction!

Brahma grew and became the supreme god of the learned. He gradually absorbed the idea of Soul, whether individual or universal, and became identical with all existencies. In the Aitareya Upaniṣad it is said, that "Originally this Universe was indeed Soul only, nothing else whatever existed"[139] and then, in answer to the question–"What is this Soul?" it is stated, "This is Brahma; he is Indra; he is Prajāpati; these gods are he and so are the five primary elements. . . . Whatever lives, or walks, or flies, or what is immovable, *all that* is the eye of intelligence. . . . Intelligence is Brahma the great one."[140]. "All the Universe is Brahma; from him it springs, into him it is dissolved; in him it breathes–so meditate thou with a calm mind."[141] "As, from blazing fire, sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousandfold, thus are various beings brought forth from the Imperishable, and return hither also."[142] "Lord of the Universe, glory to Thee; Thou art the Self of all; Thou art the maker of all, the enjoyer of all; Thou art life, and the lord of all pleasure and joy."[143] Here Self both divine and human, as well as all existencies, are gathered up in Brahma. Max Müller says," It was an epoch in the history of the human mind when the identity of the masculine Self and the neutral Brahma was for the first time perceived; and the name of the discoverer has not been forgotten. It was Sāṇḍilya who declared that the Self within our hearts is Brāhma."[144]

Then, after identifying the two ideas–Ātman and Brahma–both are resolved into the original "That" of R.V., 129, 2, 3. "All worlds are contained in it (Brahma), and no one

goes beyond. This is 'That'." "As the one fire, after it has entered the world, through one, becomes different according to whatever it burns, thus the one Self within all beings becomes different according to whatever it enters, and exists also without." "There is one ruler, the Self, within all things, who makes the one form manifold. The wise who perceive him within their self, to them belongs eternal happiness; not to others." "There is one eternal thinker, thinking non-eternal thoughts, who, though one, fulfils the desires of many. The wise who perceive him within their self, to them belongs eternal peace; not to others." "They perceive that highest, indescribable pleasure, saying, This is 'That'."[145]

One of the arguments we adduced in proof of the priority of Varuṇa to other Āryan gods was the fact that the ethical consciousness of sin is more prominent and intense in the hymns addressed to him than in the hymns addressed to other gods. We have historical evidence that Brahma is the last divine conception of the Vedas; and it is a noteworthy fact that with the disappearance of the conception of God as a personality, the ethical consciousness of sin also disappeared. For, apart from a personal God, there can be no sin as the transgression of an objective law. Much less can there be when a man is regarded as only the fictitious appearance of one infinite characterless entity, called Brahma, which is "neither effect nor cause, neither past nor future; which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without smell, without beginning, without end";[146] which is "without breath, without *mind,* pure, higher than the highest, Imperishable".[147] "It is not woman, it is not man, nor is it neuter; whatever body it takes, with that it is joined."[148]

We may suitably close this section in the words of Dr. Christlieb, "If the thoughts of the old Hindus did sometimes rise from the contemplation of various deified natural

phenomena to that of one primal cause of all things, this cause was regarded not as the one God, but as an impersonal undefined existence, of which all that could be said was, *that* is not *what* it is; with which, therefore, every personal communion in prayer would be impossible".[149] This quite agrees with the Bṛhadārayaṇyaka Upaniṣad, which says that the teaching of Brahma is "No, No".[150]

3. The Origin of the Vedic Concept God

To a superficial observer, the Vedic gods appear nothing more than natural phenomena personified and worshipped. Or, in the language of Professor Max Müller, "They are masks without an actor, the creations of man, not his creator, they are nomina, not numina, names without beings, not beings without names". Comparative Philology has disclosed their original physical import, and the myths of ages, which had clustered around them, have been scattered like darkness before the dawn. Let Hindus ponder this, and they will be convinced that the religion of their ancestors in the far-off Vedic age has not been altogether inaptly denominated "Physiolatry."

And yet, we should be doing injustice to that religion by representing it as nothing more than "Physiolatry". No religion has ever existed without recognising the supersensuous or supernatural. Even the lowest fetish worshippers do not worship a common stone or a common piece of bone, but stones and bones which are supposed to possess some invisible, superhuman power. And so the Vedic religion was not all nature, but nature and the supernatural *blended* so mysteriously that the one could not be distinguished from the other.[151] Were it all nature, there would be no room for personification, since personification is the ascription of human life and activities to objects not naturally possessing them. The Vedic Āryans, by personifying and worshipping the objects of nature,

show that they were conscious of dependence upon, and relationship to, something higher than nature. Personification implies the knowledge of a person, and the personification of a natural object *as an object of worship* implies the possession of the concept, more or less clear, of what *we* denominate God.

The questions then arise – What is the nature of this concept? How was it formed? What was the genesis of the idea of God? Did man originally evolve it out of his ignorance of the unknown causes of the order and eccentricities of natural phenomena, which struck him with wonder and awe? or from frightful dreams, the result of over-eating? or is it the natural and inevitable product of the human mind when in contact with the external world? *Ex nihilo nihil fit,* or, as the Hindu philosophers put it, *Navastuno vastu sidditi?* The cause must be adequate to produce the effect. Unless man, therefore, were endowed with the power or faculty to conceive and to adore some invisible superhuman Being, he could no more evolve the idea of such a Being from gross ignorance, rude fears, or frightful dreams, than the dog or the monkey. What we want to know is the *origin* of the faculty or the tendency which irresistibly leads man to recognise and worship some object *as God*. This tendency, present everywhere, like a weft running through the warp of human history, expresses an eternal fact, *viz., that man is constituted a religious being*. This tendency is as inseparable from his nature as the tendency to express his thoughts in articulate speech. Hence he grows into religion as naturally and unconsciously as he grows into manhood. He no sooner wakes to the consciousness that he is a being separate from nature, than he feels his dependence upon, and moral relationship to, some Being above nature, whose smiles are his joy, whose frowns are his woe. This is the first sense of

the Godhead, the *sensus numinis;*" a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused; a sense," not the result of reasoning or generalisation, but an immediate perception, as real and irresistible as that of the *ego*. "In perceiving the Infinite, we neither count, nor measure, nor compare, nor name. We know not what if is, but we know that it is, and we know it because we actually feel it, and are brought in contact with it. If it seems too bold to say that man actually sees the invisible, let us say that he suffers from the invisible, and this invisible is only a special name for the Infinite."[152] And as man is conscious of the *ego* before knowing what man is, so he is conscious of the supernatural before knowing what *God* is. This is necessarily a very vague and incomplete idea of the Godhead, so vague as to elude definition, and so incomplete as not even to be named.[153] Herodotus tells us that the Pelasgians for a long time offered prayers and sacrifices to the gods without having names for any one of them; and, according to Tacitus, the ancient Germans worshipped God as "that secret thing known only by reverence"; and we have seen that some of the Vedic bards express their consciousness of Him by the phrase "The One" or "That One". A venerable old Brahman told us once, with feelings of deep concern, "I am very glad that you have come to my village to-day, for you will tell me about that 'Great One' whom all should worship. I am greatly perplexed about Him. I know that He is, but I do not know *who* He is, or where to find Him." Then pointing to the sun, he said, "I have been looking for Him there, but cannot find Him; and in this idol," pointing to the image of Viṣṇu in the temple, "but He is not there. I have searched for Him in this book"—holding up the Viṣṇu Purāṇa— "but cannot find Him." And so the ancient Āryans, not knowing Him of whose existence they were certain, tried to find Him everywhere in the phenomena of nature. They

personified these; for an object of worship must be a person capable of knowing, of feeling, and of exercising influence, to whom they could pray and offer sacrifice.[154] "It is only by conceiving Him as a conscious Being that we can stand in any religious relation to Him; that we can form such a representation of Him as is demanded by our spiritual wants, insufficient though it be to satisfy our intellectual curiosity."[155]

But though the Vedic Āryans were ignorant of God as a definite Being, separate from natural phenomena, they possessed a remarkably accurate knowledge of the actions and attributes which pre-eminently belong to Him. They ascribed to the personified elements of nature the functions of Creator, Preserver, and Ruler; and the attributes of Infinity, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Immortality, Rghteousness, Holiness, and Mercy. This knowledge is far more definite and extensive than that given in the *sensus numinis*. How did they acquire it? An answer to this question will make clear both the validity of our definition of the "first sense of the Godhead," and the means by which it was developed, so as to embrace the leading characteristics of the Deity. There are only three answers conceivable, viz. : (1) They acquired it by Intuition, (2) by Experience, or (3) by Revelation.

1. Did they acquire it by Intuition? We have already stated what knowledge of God we conceive man capable of acquiring by intuition; viz., a vague and indefinite idea of the supernatural in the natural, of some Being above on whom he depends, and to whom he owes homage. But who that Being is, and what His attributes are, he has no means of knowing.[156] If this be correct, it follows that the ancient Āryans did not acquire their knowledge of the divine functions and attributes by intuition. But in order to test the correctness of this position, let us suppose, with some Philosophers and Theologians, that man possesses a power of intuition trans-

cending that of the *sensus numinis,* by means of which he is able, so to speak, to gaze immediately on God; and to this power let us ascribe the Vedic knowledge of the divine functions and attributes. Or, in other words, let us suppose that as man acquires his knowledge of the external world, because his senses give him the intuition of it, so he has the knowledge of God, because he has a higher power of intuition, by which he directly perceives Him. On this supposition, the Vedic Āryans must have acquired such knowledge of God as is possible for man to acquire, viz., as a personal Being separate from nature, yet immanent in it, and possessing the functions and attributes which they ascribed to Him. For in a mental intuition of this kind, it is inconceivable that one can acquire knowledge of the *divine attributes* without at the same time acquiring knowledge of the *divine person* to whom they belong.[157]

It is *historically* true, however, that the Vedic Āryans did not know *such* a Being, hut only His attributes and functions, which they applied indiscriminately to all the gods of their Pantheon, the deified elements of nature. All these gods are alike Supreme, Creators, Preservers, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Beneficent, Immortal. "Among you, O gods, there is none that is small, none that is young; for all are great indeed."[158] Heaven and Earth are said to be the parents of the gods, not only of the inferior ones, but of the great gods, Indra, Agni, and Sūrya; and each of these again is said to be the Creator of Heaven and Earth, as well as of all things visible and invisible. "Indra is greater than all;" "Agni comprehends all the gods as the circumference of a wheel does its spokes".[159] Sūrya is the concentration of all power in one, the wonderful host of rays; "the eye of Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni;" "soul of all that moves or rests"[160] Varuṇa is the lord of all, of Heaven and Earth; and yet was nursed in the lap of

Aditi. Soma "generates all the gods, and upholds the worlds". "He is the maker of Heaven and Earth, of Agni, of Sūrya, of Indra, and of Viṣṇu."[161] "Viśvakarman is wise and pervading, Creator, Disposer, Father, highest object of vision."[162] The Dawn is the "mother of the gods, eye of all the earth, light of the sacrifice".[163] Aditi is not only the mother of all the gods, but is identical with all that exists; and yet Aditi is both the mother and the daughter of Dakṣa. "Dakṣa was born of Aditi, and Aditi from Dakṣa." "For Aditi was born, O Dakṣa, she who is thy daughter; after her the gods were born, the blessed who share immortality."[164] Then these gods are mutually interchangeable. "Thou, Agni, art Indra, art Viṣṇu, becamest Mitra when kindled; in thee, the son of strength, are all the gods."[165] Indra says, "I was Manu, I am the sun, I am the wise Ṛṣi Kakṣivān".[166]

It might be objected that the cosmical functions of these gods are sufficient to account for the similarity of their description, and the interchangeableness of their names. True; but that only proves that the Vedic Āryans were ignorant of the true God, though they possessed a knowledge more or less clear of His attributes and functions.

It might be affirmed that the personality of God was originally apprehended by the soul, but that in course of time it gradually faded away so as to leave nothing behind but His attributes. But *(a)* this is inconsistent with the supposition that man possesses a power transcending that of the *sensus numinis,* by means of which he directly perceives God. For as long as man is conscious, he must be conscious of that power; and if that power once supplied him with the knowledge of God and His attributes, there is no reason to conclude that it will not always do so. *(b)* Had the Vedic Āryans acquired their knowledge of the divine attributes and functions by intuition, and assuming that that intuition implies a knowledge of the divine Person, and that the mental and spiritual

necessities of man are similar throughout the world, it is natural to suppose that all other nations would have acquired divine knowledge in the same way. There is no fact, however, better known to the students of ancient Religions and Mythologies than that no individuals – much less nations – when left to themselves, have ever acquired anything like a clear and certain conception of a Supreme Personal Being distinct from nature. "Even Plato did not make his way up to the idea of a divine, self-conscious, Personal Being, nor even distinctly propounded the question of the personality of God. It is true that Aristotle maintained more definitely than Plato that the Deity must be a personal Being. But even for him, it was not an absolute, free, creative power, but one limited by primordial matter; not the world's *Creator,* but only one who gave shape to the rude materials, and so not truly absolute."[167]

2. If the Vedic Āryans did not acquire their knowledge of the divine functions and attributes intuitively, did they acquire it empirically? We acquire knowledge by experience, by what we feel, hear and see. All knowledge is either produced or occasioned by sense and reason. And from one point of view there is nothing in the intellect except what has passed through these two avenues. But sense and reason, we are told, are finite, and deal only with finite things; and hence whatever transcends these limits is unknown and unknowable. And as the idea of God transcends the apprehension of sense and the comprehension of reason, it is pronounced a mere hallucination, and the grand attributes ascribed to Him are said to be nothing more than the vague creations of poetic exuberance. But why man in every age and in every part of the world should entertain the idea of God, and clothe it with the highest attributes, is on this theory a problem unsolved.

Besides, is it not a fact that all men are conscious of some things which transcend both their sense and reason, though their sense and reason were doubtless the occasion, or the factors, which produced that consciousness? Are we not all conscious of infinite space,[168] and infinite time, either as an inference from, or an intuition by, the finite space and time supplied us by the senses? When we look into space as far as we can see, we can neither fix its beginning nor its ending. And when we contemplate time, whether we look backward or forward, there is always a beyond and a before. Both time and space are to us boundless, infinite. We are so constituted, that wherever we fix the boundary of either, we are conscious of time and space beyond. It is obvious, then, that we have the concept of infinite space, and the concept of infinite time, both of which are supersensuous, though both are either elaborated from, or occasioned by, sensuous impressions.[169] The conclusions of experience are wider than its data. Hence, there appears to be no *a priori* reason why the Vedic Āryans should not have acquired their knowledge of the divine attributes and functions by the impressions of sense and the reflections of reason – the mind in contact with the external world.

We have seen already how they *apparently* acquired the concept of the Infinite by contemplating the boundlessness of the Firmament, from which the dawn and the sun flashed forth every morning, to which they gave expression in Aditi.

The regularity with which the heavenly bodies move, the succession of day and night, and the periodical recurrence of the seasons, within the sphere of Varuṇa, the Heaven-God, might have suggested the idea that he is the Ruler of all things visible and invisible, whose laws, *vratas,* are fixed and unassailable.[170]

The permanence of the Firmament as contrasted with the visible movements of the sun, moon, and stars, the clouds, and storms, and the changes and bustle of this noisy world, might have originated the idea of Undecaying *(agara)*, Immortal *(amarta)*, or Eternal.[171]

Again, when contemplating the Heaven-God, enthroned high above the earth, with the sun, moon, and stars, as eyes penetrating the darkness, and seeing all that takes place in the world below, what is more natural than that they should call him *Asura Viśvadevas,* the All-knowing Spirit, or the Omniscient?[172]

Moreover, perceiving that light and form, colour and beauty, emerge every morning, out of a gloom in which all objects seem confounded, the Vedic Āryans might suppose that in like manner the brightness, order and beauty of the world, had sprung from darkness, in which the elements of all things had existed in indistinguishable chaos.[173] And since it is the sun that disperses the darkness of the night, and gives back to man the Heaven and the Earth every morning, it is easy to understand how they might have concluded that the sun brought them forth from the original chaos, and hence that he is their Creator.[174]

Again, the bright light of the sun calls men from their slumber every morning, and with its warm glow enlivens the world, and causes the earth to bring forth her fruits; and so it is conceivable that the idea of Preserver or Enlivener originated.[175]

Lastly, by applying superlative epithets to the sun, it would become supreme, "god among gods, and the divine leader of all the gods"; and so the conception of Omnipotence might have been formed.[176]

Now, it is conceivable that in this way the functions of

Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, and the attributes of Infinity, Omnipotence, Omniscience and Eternity might have been *empirically* acquired. And as it is natural to suppose that all the excellent qualities of which man is conscious as existing in himself, must necessarily exist in the same manner, but in an infinitely higher degree, in the object of his worship, we may conceive that thus the moral attributes of Holiness, Justice, Mercy, Love and Goodness ascribed to God might have been acquired.

When we say that it is conceivable that the Vedic Āryans acquired their knowledge of the divine attributes and functions *empirically,* we must remember that it is conceivable by *us* who already possess a knowledge of them; and hence bring that knowledge to the contemplation of natural phenomena. It was very different with the Vedic Āryans, for they, *ex hypothesi,* had no such antecedent knowledge. All that they possessed was the consciousness of the supernatural in the natural, which they could neither define, nor separate from the natural, and which consequently, they worshipped together with the natural as a *person.* The question then arises—Is it probable that they, starting with that consciousness *only,* elaborated their knowledge of the divine attributes and functions from the impressions of sense and the reflections of reason?

Let us suppose that they did so; and the conclusion is inevitable that they possessed a marvellous power of abstraction and generalisation, a power equal to that of the best thinkers of the present age. There is nothing *a priori* impossible in that; but we may reasonably ask *(a)* Is the possession of such a power consistent with the historical fact that they were not conscious of the contradiction involved in the ascription of infinite attributes to many individuals? Is it at all probable that a people capable of observing so accurately, and of

reasoning so vigorously, as to acquire the concept of the Infinite, of the Omnipotent, and of the Omniscient, could at the same time be so weak and childish as not to perceive the contradiction involved in ascribing infinite attributes to more than one?[177] The contradiction, involved in the co-existence of deities, which by their attributes limit and exclude one another, cannot be resolved into mere exaggerated expressions uttered in the ecstatic fervour of prayer and praise—poetical exuberance—for in that case it is not probable that such expressions would have been calmly collected, and preserved in such large numbers, without betraying the consciousness of their contradictory character in some "note" or "comment". Neither does it appear possible to refer the inconsistency to different epochs or diversities of worship; for it is undoubtedly the distinguishing feature of the whole Vedic theology, which has been strikingly expressed by Professor Max Müller in the following words, "Each god is to the mind of the suppliant as good as all the gods. He is felt at the time as Supreme and Absolute, in spite of the necessary limitations, which to our mind a plurality of gods must entail on every single god."

(b) Is the possession of the power of abstraction and generalisation, implied in the empirical acquisition of the knowledge of the divine attributes and functions, consistent with the *historical fact* that they never grasped the idea of God as a *person separate from nature,* to whom alone these attributes belong? We have seen that in obedience to the imperious tendency of the human mind, which leads it to logical unity, the old Devas, the old gods of nature, were discarded, and only "One" without a second affirmed *(eka eva advitiyami)*. We have seen also that the "One" of the Upaniṣads—the Ātman or Brahma—is nothing more than the indefinite abstraction of Being in general, without any distinguishing characteristics to constitute a Deity. "For how

should mortal man be wiser than the Jñāna-Kand, which tells us how Brahma is bodiless and activeless, passiveless, calm, unqualified, unchanged, pure life, pure thought, pure Joy?"[178] Brahma is "irresistible, impalpable, without kindred, without colour, has neither eyes nor ears, neither hands nor feet, imperishable, manifested in infinite variety, present everywhere, self-luminous without and within, without origin, without vital breath or thinking faculty".[179] This is not the unity of a living being, which underlies the unity of Religion, but the unity of thought, which constitutes the unity of Philosophy. The unity of the former is Monotheism, the unity of the latter is Monism. The highest abstraction of Religion is a Personal God, invisible, yet felt; distinct from nature, yet immanent in it; the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and yet possessing qualities which appeal to the tenderest and noblest susceptibilities of the human heart. The highest abstraction of Philosophy is a great essence, an infinite and eternal energy, from which all things proceed, an impersonal, neuter Brahma, the totality of all existence. This Brahma is not the abstract of any one group of thoughts, ideas, or conceptions; it is the abstract of *all* thoughts, ideas, or conceptions. It is analogous to the word "existence" in Western Philosophy. For that which is common to all thoughts, ideas or conceptions, and cannot be got rid of, is what we predicate by the word "existence". Dissociated, as this becomes, from each of its modes, by the perpetual change of those modes, it remains an indefinite consciousness of something constant under all modes; of being apart from its appearances – the permanent element in nature of J.S. Mill. The sages of the Upaniṣads grasped the idea of existence – of something constant under all modes – which they called Brahma. But they went further. They denied the reality of all modes regarding the world as phenomenal only, and all things therein

as fictitious emanations from Brahma, like mirage from the rays of the sun. "All living things are only the One Self fictitiously limited to this or that fictitious mind or body, and return into the Self as soon as the fictitious limitation disappears."[180]

One cannot insist too strongly on the distinction between the highest abstraction of Philosophy and the highest abstraction of Religion; for many eminent writers, by failing to appreciate this distinction, have fallen into the error of identifying the Monism of the Upaniṣads with the Monotheism of the Bible! Hence, they have altogether failed to apprehend the highest result of religious and speculative thought in India during the Vedic age.

But lest it be thought that we are exaggerating this distinction, to the disparagement of the sages of the Vedas, let us quote the following mighty words from Mr. Gough's *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads,*[181] a most masterly book on the highest speculations of the Vedic Āryans. "If we are to use the language of European Philosophy, we must pronounce the Brahma of the Upaniṣads to be *unconscious,* for consciousness begins where duality begins. The ideal or spiritual reality of Brahma is not convertible with conscious spirit. On the contrary, the spiritual reality, that, according to the poets of the Upaniṣads, underlies all things, has *per se* no cognition of objects; it lies beyond duality. It is true that these poets speak of it as existence, intelligence, beatitude. But we must be cautious. Brahma is not intelligence in our sense of the word. The intelligence, the thought, that is the Self, and which the Self is, is described as eternal knowledge, without objects, the imparting of light to the cognitions of migrating sentiences. This thought is characterless and eternal; their cognitions are charactered, and come and go. Brahma is beatitude. But we must again be cautious. Brahma is not

beatitude in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a bliss beyond the distinction of subject and object, a bliss the poets of the Upaniṣads liken to dreamless sleep. Brahma *per se* is neither god nor conscious god; and on this it is necessary to insist, to exclude the baseless analogies to Christian theology that have sometimes been imagined by writers, Indian and European. Be it then repeated that the Indian Philosophers everywhere affirm that Brahma *is* knowledge; that this knowledge is without an object known, and that omniscience is predicable of Brahma only by a metaphor. If we were to interpret such knowledge by the word '*consciousness,*' we should still have to say that Brahma *is* consciousness, not that Brahma *has* consciousness, or is a conscious spirit."

How far such a conception of the Supreme Being is from the Biblical conception of God, I need not indicate. I wish to point out, however, that, in so far as the Vedic Āryans gave up the idea of God as a living, energising, sympathising *Person,* they lost ground from a religious point of view. For, as Mansel says, "Personality with all its limitations, though far from exhibiting the absolute nature of God as He is, is yet truer, grander, more elevating, more religious, than those barren, vague, meaningless abstractions, in which men babble about nothing under the name of the Infinite. Personal conscious existence, limited though it be, is yet the noblest of all existence of which man can dream; for it is that by which all existence is revealed to him; it is grander than the grandest object which man can know; for it is that which knows, not that which is known."[182]

(c) Is the supposition that the Vedic Āryans elaborated the divine attributes and functions from the impressions of sense and the reflections of reason consistent with the *historical order* of thought found in the Vedas? Man, in the mental, as well as in the physical, world, has to proceed slowly,

and conquer everything gradually, by the "sweat of his brow". If the Vedic Āryans, therefore, thought out the divine attributes and functions, it is reasonable to suppose that they did so gradually; and we might expect to set: one concept following another, and each concept in the process of evolution, and consequently the fully developed concepts aft the end. The reverse, however, is the order of thought revealed in the Vedas. There we find the concepts of the divine attributes and functions fully developed in the Mantras, or *oldest* portions of the Vedas; whereas in the Upaniṣads, the *latest* portions, they are dissipated, one after the other, till nothing is left but *Nirguṇa* Brahma, – Brahma, without qualities, predicates, or determinations, – a something to be defined by "No, No". At the beginning we find Heaven-Father; and at the end a characterless Abstraction!

We have seen already that the loftiest conception of God, in conjunction with the most intense ethical consciousness of sin, found expression in Varuṇa, the oldest god of the Āryans; and that, during the long interval between Varuṇa and Brahma, that conception was gradually corrupted, until in Brahma it was lost, and with it the ethical consciousness of sin became well-nigh, if not altogether, extinct. We have no reason to believe that that corruption began with the Vedic age; but, on the contrary, there are many indications that it had begun at a much earlier period. Both Varuṇa and Dyaus, the most ancient gods of the undivided Āryans, appear in the oldest portions of the Vedas as fully developed mythological persons. Varuṇa is associated with the Ādityas, and Dyaus is wedded to Pṛthivi. Now, if Mythology be, as Professor Max Müller says, a disease of language which presupposes a healthy frame, it is obvious that a long time was necessary to confound the "god of heaven" with the material heaven, and to transform the latter into the mythological forms which find expression

in Varuṇa and Dyaus. It is evident, then, (1) That the higher up to the source of the Vedic religion we push our inquiries the purer and simpler we find the conception of God; and (2) That in proportion as we come down the stream of time the more corrupt and complex we find it. We conclude, therefore, that the Vedic Āryans did not acquire their knowledge of the divine attributes and functions *empirically,* for in that case we should find at the end what we now find at the beginning. Hence we must seek for a theory which will account alike for the acquisition of that knowledge, the God-like conception of Varuṇa, and for that gradual-depravation which culminated in Brahma.

3. And what theory will cover these facts as well as the doctrine of a "Primitive Revelation"?[183] If we admit, on the authority of the Bible, that God revealed Himself originally to man, the knowledge of the divine attributes possessed by the Vedic Āryans would be a "reminiscence". And if, on the authority of both the Bible and consciousness, we admit the sinful tendency of human nature, which makes the retention of divine knowledge a matter of difficulty or aversion, it is easy to conceive that the idea of God, as a Spiritual Personal Being, would gradually become hazy, and ultimately disappear from the memory; while His attributes would survive, like broken fragments of a once united whole. God is a spirit distinct from nature; and the difficulty is to retain that characteristic, in spite of the powerful tendency of the mind to contemplate existencies as having the properties of extension in space and time. And when this characteristic is forgotten, and material objects are substituted in its place, the divine attributes naturally pass over to these objects, and by association are remembered. There is a great law or principle in the spiritual, as well as in the natural, world, viz., the principle by which an organism neglecting to develop itself, or

failing to maintain what has been bestowed upon it, deteriorates, and becomes more and more adapted to a degenerate form of life. Under the operation of this law, the ancient Āryans (as well as all other nations), neglecting to cultivate spiritual religion, lost the knowledge of God as a Supreme Personal Being separate from nature, which had been bestowed upon them, and dissected the Infinite One into many finite ones, giving a characteristic to each.[184] Or, in the words of Scripture, "They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever".[185]

This being the case, we must believe that, when applying the divine attributes to the personified elements and forces of nature, the Vedic Āryans were using language the full meaning of which they did not understand. This is self-evident; for had they understood its full meaning, they would have been conscious of the contradiction involved in ascribing infinite attributes to more than one being. The language is an echo of a purer worship in the primeval home. It is applicable to the true God alone. It has no meaning when applied to any one, of any thing else. It is the language of monotheism, and monotheism was the "primitive religion".[186]

Professor H.H. Wilson says, "There can be no doubt that the fundamental doctrine of the Vedas is monotheism".[187] And Professor Max Müller, in his *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature,* says, "There is a monotheism that precedes the polytheism of the Veda. The idea of God, though never entirely lost, had been clouded over by error. The names given to God had been changed to gods, and their real meaning had faded away from the memory of man." M. Adolphe Pictet, in the second volume of his great work, *Les Origines Indo-Européennes,* gives it as his opinion, that the religion of the undivided Āryans was "a monotheism more or less vaguely defined". And both Pictet and Müller maintain

that traces of the primitive monotheism are visible in the Vedas; that "the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology like the blue sky that is hidden by a passing cloud". Baron Bunsen, in his *God in History,* says, "The so-called Nature-mythology is not the original element in religion, as many now-a-days seem once more disposed to assume, who think they can dispense with all philosophical culture. Religion can no more than Language have been the product of a misunderstanding. It is a contradiction to all the laws of thought to imagine that the necessary universal expression of the religious consciousness can be a mere mental fallacy. How could both Religion and Language be universal, and develop themselves organically, if they were not based upon reason? Mythology has sprung up gradually out of a poetic, childlike, yet deeply significant playing of the mind with metaphors. But afterwards usage, legend, mystical teaching, have crystallised what was at first nothing more than a simile, while its real essence comes to be no longer understood, or is only seen under a mystical or distorted aspect."

Is it not philosophically true that polytheism presupposes monotheism? "Is it true, as many seem to suppose, that polytheism is older than monotheism? Is it not likely that the simple belief is older than the more complex?" Can the concept many precede the concept one? Is not plurality the aggregate of units? What is the development of though as seen in children? Is it not from one to two, from the singular to the plural, from the simple to the complex, from unity to diversity, and then, by generalisation, into abstract unity? It is obvious, therefore, that the knowledge of the divine attributes and functions possessed by the Vedic Āryans was neither the product of Intuition nor Experience, but a "Survival," the result of a "Primitive Revelation".

What are Dyaushpitar, Jupiter, Father-sky, but a reflection of this Primitive Revelation? And what do we see in the application to the sky of the epithet "Father," the name by which God loves to be known among men, but evidence of the sad fact that man had already commenced his downward career; had already forgotten his heavenly Father, had already transferred his allegiance from Him to heaven, the place of His abode; had already called the sky Father? We have an echo of the same truth in the prayer of Zoroaster, the Persian prophet, "Teach thou me, *Ahura Mazda,* out of thyself from *heaven";* as well as in the prayer of the Yebus, a South African tribe, "God in heaven, guard us from sickness and death; God, grant us happiness and wisdom". And we have a confirmation of it in the fact, that the Hebrews called heaven, the dwelling-place of the Most High. His throne, and that they called Himself, "The God of heaven, their Father". The Hindus, now, whenever they speak of God as invisible, point up to the sky, and exclaim, "The Baghavan," the "Supreme Being," is there. And even the Zulus, among the degraded races of Africa, when asked "who made all things?" look up to the sky, and say, "The Creator of all things is in heaven".[188] Aristotle says, "All men have a suspicion of gods, all assign to them the highest place". And again, "The ancients assigned to the gods heaven and the space above, because it was alone eternal".

In the Theology of the Vedas, we have a record of *re*gress rather than of *pro*gress, of deterioration rather than of improvement, in the conception of God. And this is just what might be expected when due weight is given to the "Fall," and the consequent tendency to rebel against God, which entered human nature. This fact of sin is overlooked by many who write on the "Origin and Growth of Religion," and the consequence is that they present us with a caricature

and not with the real portrait. No one can portray the Origin and Development of Religion without giving due prominence to the "Fall," the effects of which are strewn like withered leaves everywhere. This fact alone can account satisfactorily for the depravation of the concept God in all known Religions. It is scarcely necessary to point out to the readers of the Old Testament how persistently the Jews materialised the spiritual conception of God, communicated to them by Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets. That Fetishism, the lowest sub-stage in M. Comte's first law of religious Evolution, is not a primary, but a corrupted, form of a purer faith, has been amply proved by Professor Max Müller in his *Hibbert Lectures*. And "all the great religions of the world which can be traced to the teaching or influence of individual men have steadily declined from the teaching of their founders. Whether we now study what is held by the disciples of Buddha, of Confucius, or of Zoroaster, it is the same result. Whenever we can arrive at the original teaching of the known founders of religious systems, we find that teaching uniformly higher, more spiritual, than the teaching now. The same law has affected Christianity, with this difference only, that alone of all the historical religions of the world, it has hitherto shown an unmistakable power of perennial revival and reform. But we know that the process of corruption had begun its work even in the lifetime of the Apostles; and every Church in Christendom will admit the general fact, although each of them will give a different explanation of it. Mahomedanism, which is the last and latest of all the historical religions of the world, shows a still more remarkable phenomenon. The corruption in this case began not only in the lifetime but in the life of the prophet and founder of that religion. Mahomed was himself his own most corrupt disciple. In the earliest days of his mission he was best as a man and greatest as a

teacher. His life was purer and his doctrines more spiritual when his voice was a solitary voice crying in the wilderness, than when it was joined in chorus by the voices of many millions. In his case the progress of development in a wrong direction was singularly distinct, and very rapid."[189]

The history of religious thought everywhere shows that the tendency of man, when left to himself, is to degrade the conception of God, and to sink into polytheism. There is no evidence whatever of a polytheistic people, when left to themselves, working their way up to a monotheistic religion.

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5. *Ibid.,* ix., 92, 4.
6. *Ibid.,* iii., 9, 9.
7. A.V., xi., 5, 2.
8. From Sanskrit *div* or *dyu,* to shine, meaning "the bright" of "the shining one".
9. Matt., vi., 9.
10. James, i., 17.
11. R.V., iv., i., 10.
12. R.V., iv., 17, 4.
13. Some traces of the original meaning of Zeus are supposed to be found in such words as Zeus rains; fair sky; *sub Jove frigido,* under the cold sky; and *sub divo,* under the open sky.
14. R.V., i., 131, I; i., 61, 9.
15. "Ouranos," says Max Müller, "in the language of Hesiod is used as a name for the sky; he is made or born that 'he should be a firm place for the blessed gods'. It is said twice that Uranos covers everything (v., 127), and that when he brings the night, he stretched out everywhere embracing

the earth. This sounds almost as if the Greek myth had still preserved a recollection of the etymological power of Uranos. For Uranos is the Sanskrit Varuna; and derived from a root *var*, to cover; Varuna being in the Veda also a name of the firmanent, but especially connected with the night and opposed to Mitra, the day" (*Chips*, vol. ii., pp 67, 8).

16. The grounds for identifying *Varuṇa* and *Ahura-Mazda* are:

I. Traces of his original sky nature are clearly visible in the description of the bodily appearance of Ahura-Mazda. Mr.J. Darmesteter says, "The sovereign god of Persia, notwithstanding the character of profound abstraction which he has acquired and which is reflected in his name *Ahura Mazda,* the 'omniscient Lord,' can himself be recognised as a god of the heavens. The ancient formulae of the litanies still show that he is luminous and corporeal. They invoke the creator *Ahura-Mazda,* resplendent, very great, very beautiful, white, luminous seen from afar; they invoke the entire body of *Ahura-Mazda,* the body of Ahura which is the greatest of bodies; they say that the sun is his eye, and that the sky is the garment embroidered with stars, with which he arrays himself. Like Varuṇa like Zeus, the lightning is in his hands, 'the molten brass which he causes to flow on the two worlds'; like them he is the father of the god of lightning."

2. The term *Asura,* "spirit," which is etymologically the same as the Zend *Ahura,* is often applied to Varuṇa, not, however, exclusively.

3. The Vedic Ādityas, of whom Varuṇa is the chief, are historically connected with the Zend Amesha-Spentas, of whom *Ahura-Mazda* is the most distinguished.

4. The correspondence between the names of the Vedic *Mitra* and the Zend *Mithra* is such as to place their identity beyond a doubt.

5. As Varuṇa and Mitra are often invoked together in the Vedas, so *Ahura-Mazda* and *Mithra* are invoked in the Zend Avesta.

6. And lastly, as Ahura-Mazda in the Zend-Avesta is opposed by Angro-mainyus, the evil one, so Varuṇa in the Veda is

opposed by *Nirṛti,* the "unrighteous one," which, according to Sāyaṇa, is equivalent to *pāpadevata,* "the deity of sin".

17. R.V., viii., 87, 3; viii., 41, 3.

18. Ahura-Mazda is represented by Zoroaster, his prophet, as "the creator of the earthly and spiritual life, the Lord of the whole Universe, in whose hands are all the creatures. He is the light and source of light; he is the wisdom and intellect; he is in possession of all good things, spiritual and wordly, such as the good mind, immortality, health, the best truth, devotion and purity, and abundance of every earthly good. All these gifts he grants to the pious man, who is upright inverse, he not only rewards the good, but he is a punisher of the wicked at the same time. All that is created, good or evil, fortune or misfortune, is his work." (Dr. Haug's *Essays,* p. 302, 3rd edition).

"Archilochus sings Zeus father, as the god who rules the heavens, who watches the guilty and unjust actions of men, who administers chastisement to monsters, the god who created heaven and earth." "The old man of Asera knows that Zeus is the father of gods and men; that his eye sees and comprehends all things and reaches all that he wishes." Nausikaa knows that Zeus was mercful when she addresses the shipwrecked Ulysses—"Zeus himself, the Olympian, distributes happiness to the good and the bad, to every one, as he pleases. And to the also *he* probably has sent this, and you ought by all means to bear it."

19. Greek *Zeus* and probably Latin *Deus,* German *Zio,* Anglo-Saxon *Tiu,* Lithuanian *Diewas,* Welsh *Duw.*

20. "If we combine into one the attributes of soverign power and majesty which we find in the other gods, we shall have the god Varuṇa. In other sections the religion of the Veda is ritualistic, and at times intensely speculative; but with Varuṇa it goes down to the depth of the conscience, and realises the idea of holiness" (M. Barth's *Religions of India,* pp. 16, 17).

21. See *Des Origines du Zoroastrisme,* par M.C. de Harlez, extrait du *Journal Asiatique,* Paris, 1879-80.

22. R.V., i., 115, 1; i., 25, 13; vii., 87, 2.
23. *Ibid.,* vii., 86, 1.
24. *Ibid.,* i., 24, 8; ii., 28, 4.
25. *Ibid.,* ii., 22, 10; 25, 8.
26. *Ibid.,* ii., 28, 8.
27. *Ibid.,* i., 25; i., 24, 9, 10; Atharva-Veda, iv., 16.
28. R.V., vii., 88, 5; ii., 41, 5; i., 25, 7.
29. *Ibid.,* i., 25, 8, 9.
30. *Ibid.,* i., 25, 11.
31. A.V., iv., 16.
32. *Ibid.,* 16, 6.
33. R.V., i., 25, 2; iv., 1, 4, 5.
34. A more literal translation of this verse is given Muir: "I go along, O thunderer, quivering like an inflated skin!" etc.
35. R.V., vii., 89. Max Müller's translation.
36. R.V., iv., 42; x., 124, 113, 5.
37. *Ibid.,* i., 23, 5.
38. *Ibid.,* vii., 61, 2.
39. *Ibid.,* i., 71, 9; i., 136, 1, 4.
40. *Ibid.,* vii., 65, 2.
41. S.V., ii., prap., 10, 1; vi., 3, 8.
42. R.V., v., 59, 8; x., 63, 3.
43. *Ibid.,* i., 113, 19.
44. *Ibid.,* ix., 114, 3.
45. *Ibid.,* vi., 74, 1; x., 90, 15; x., 122, 3; x., 82, 2.
46. *Ibid.,* i., 89, 10.
    Aeschylus, *Fragment,* 443. And so the Egyptian goddess Neith says, "I am the things that have been, that are, and that will be".
47. Sclavonic Boga.
48. R.V., vii., 50, 1.
49. *Ibid.,* xi., 61, 3, 8.
50. R.V., ii., 27, 3
51. *Ibid.,* ii., 27, 4, 14.
52. R.V., ii., 27, 5.
53. *Ibid.,* viii., 18, 17, 18.
54. *Ibid.,* vii., 18. 18, 21, 22.

'In the circle of ideas which found expression in Aditi and Dakṣa, we see a faint recollection of the great First Cause, or a carving to know the Invisible, who is behind all things and far beyond human, ken, whose attributes shone forth in Varuṇa. So it was in Greece. Though Zeus was adored as the Supreme God—something more was wanted to satisfy the carvings of the soul; and hence an Almighty Fate (Moira) was imagined before which all gods, even Zeus, had to bow.'

55. R.V., iv., 17, 4, 17; x., 90, 13; *Śat. Br.,* 11, 1, 6.
56. R.V., 8, 67, 5.
"The eye of Zeus which sees all and knows all."
57. *Ibid.,* vii., 32, 14.
58. *Ibid.,* i., 173, 6, 7.
59. R.V., x., 134, 1.
60. *Ibid.,* i., 52, 8, 12, 13; i., 55, 1; i., 61, 9; i., 81, 5; i., 103, 2; ii., 12, 1; iii., 32, 7; iv., 30, 1; vi., 30, 4; vii., 32, 16, 22, 23; viii., 21, 13; viii., 67, 5; viii., 67, 5; viii., 87, 2; x., 968; x., 23, 4; iii., 31, etc.; and Sāma-Veda *passim.*
61. R.V., v., 83.
62. *Ibid.,* i., 7, 3; iii., 34, 4.
63. R.V., i., 103, 3.
64. *Ibid.,* iii., 34, 9.
65. R.V., ii., 14.
66. Compare job, xxvi.,7. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing."
67. *Ibid.,* ii., xv., 1, 2.
68. S.V., ii., prap., 5, 3; iv., prap., 45; v., prap., 33; ii., x., 2, 6; vi., 4.
Compare what is said of Dionysus, the Grecian Soma.
He, born a god, is poured out in libations to gods, so that though him men receive good. (Muir, *S.T.,* vol. v., p. 259).
69. R.V., i., 22, 17; i., 154.
70. *Ibid.,* vi., 69, 1, 8; iv., 18, 11.
71. Compare John, iii., 8.
72. Professor Whitney, *Oriental Linguistic Studies.*
73. R.V., i., 165.

74. R.V., i., 170, 171, 4.
75. *Ibid.*, i., 19, 3, 4.
76. *Ibid.*, viii., 89, 2, 3.
77. *Ibid.*, ii., 12, 5.
78. R.V., iv., 18, 12; 19, 2; vii., 21, 7.
79. R.V., i., 31, 3, 4, 140, 141; iii., 29.
80. "The gods know all things" (Homer).
81. This character was assumed by Apollo in Greece. "He alone of the active gods is in entire and unvarying conformity with the will of Zeus, and is is messenger and agent for the most important purposes". (Mr. Gladstone, in the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1876).
82. Bṛhaspati, though sometimes differing from Brahmanaspati is also identical with him (R.V., ii., 23); also with Indra. (R.V., ii., 30, 4).
83. He also assumes a terrific form, when, with his iron tusks, he puts his enemies in his mouth and swallows them. (R.V., x., 87, 2).
84. R.V., vi., 49, 2; ii., 1, 9 i., 59, 5; i., 63, 3; vii., 3; ii., 6, 7; i., 74; viii., 39, 6; i., 94, 10; ii., 10, 2; vi., 5, 2; i., 19; iii., 29, 6; v., 12, 6; vi., ii, 2; iv., 6, 10; v., 1, 12; i., 36, 10; i., 49, 9; vi., 13, 1; vii., 1, 2; iv., 120; iii., 3, 10; x., 51, 3. Sāma-Veda, i., prap., i., 9; iii., 95, 1, 5, 5, 7, 6, 8, 8, 2; prap., vi., 4, 3; pt. ii., vi., 7; viii., 5, 14; xii., 3; xiv., 12.
85. S.V., prap., i., 9, 5; 7, 9.
86. R.V., iv., 12, 4; vii., 93, 7.
87. *Ibid.*, v., 44, 15.
88. R.V., i., iv., 1, 50, 11; i., 160, 4; viii., 90, 11, 12.
89. *Ibid.*, vii. 75, 5, 78, 3; iv., 43, 2.
90. *Ibid.*, vii., 78, 3.
91. Greek, Hws Latin *uro,* Welsh *wawr*, German *ost,* English *east*.
92. Greek Wkus, Latin *equus*.
93. R.V., i., 157, I L.
94. *Ibid.*, vii., 67, 8; vi., 62, 3, 5; v., 78, 4, 77, 3.

95. *Ibid.*, x., 39, 12; i., 47, 2; i., 34, 9.
96. R.V., i., 112, 8, 10; i., 116, 10.
97. *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.*, p. 551.
98. R.V., vii., 77.
99. *Ibid.*, vii., 34, 23. Seneca, in one of his Letters, says, "We contemplate with awe the head or sources of the great rivers. We erect altars to a rivulet, which suddenly and vigorously breaks forth from the dark. We worship the springs of hot water, and certain lakes are sacred to us on account of their darkness and unfathomable depth."
100. R.V., v., 41, 11, 12.
101. The earth, pṛthivi (broad), is called *māta,* mother,– corresponding to the Greek *Demeter,* –and Heaven and Earth are addressed asthe parents of gods and men. "At the sacrifice I worship with offerings Heaven and Earth, the promoters of righteouness, the great, the wise, the energetic, who, having gods for their offspring, thus lavish, with the gods, the choicest blessings in consequence of our hymns." "With my invocations I adore the thought of the beneficent Father, and that mighty inherent power of the Mother. The prolific parents have made all creatures, and through their favours have conferred wide immortality on their offspring" (R.V., i., 159, 1, 2).
    The resemblance between this account of the Heaven and the Earth and that of Hesoid is too striking to pass unnoticed. According to the *Theogony,* all gods, men, and animals sprang from the union of these two; and hence, in his *Works and Days,* the Earth is called the Earth, the mother of all things.
102. *Lectures on Metaphysics,* pp. 67, 8, 9.
103. R.V., i., 139-11; A.V., x., 9, 12.
104. R.V., i., 164, 46.
105. *Ibid.*, x., 11, 4, 5.
106. *Diss.*, xxxix., 5.
107. *Intel. Syst. Un.*, vii., p. 239.

108. R.V., x., 82, 7.
109. *Ibid.,* x., 82, 3.
110. R.V., x., 82, 5, 6, 7.
111. *Ibid.,* i., 164, 6.
112. *Ibid.,* x., 170, 4; iv., 53, 2, 54, 4.
113. R.V., x., 129, 1, 2, 4.
114. See this illustrated in the *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad, v.
115. R.V., i. 63, 8.
116. *Ibid.,* i., 162, 20; M.M. *H.S.L.,* p. 20.
117. "As we ourselves are governed by a soul, so hath the world in like manner a soul, that containeth it; and this is called Zeus, being the cause of life to all things that life; and, therefore, Zeus or Jupiter is said is reign over all things." (Phoenuhes, in Cudworth, *Int. Sys.,* vol. i., 424).
118. R.V., i., 164, 4.
119. *Ibid.,* i., 115, 1.
120. *Ibid.,* x., 168, 4.
121. *Aitareya-āryaṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 4; i., 1, 2.
122. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.,* ii., 1, 20; *Muṇḍaka Up.,* 1, 7.
123. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.,* 4, 14, 4. *Śvetāśvatara Up.,* 5, 6.
124. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.,* ii., 5, 15.
125. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka,* 4, 4, 15, 6.
126. *Muṇḍaka Up.,* iii., 2, 5, 9.
127. *Kaṭha. Up.,* i., 2, 23.
128. *Śvetāśvatara Up.,* i., 3.
129. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka,*ii., 4, 8, 11, 12, 13.
130. Gough's *Philosophy of the* Upaniṣads, p. 138.
131. R.V., i., 31, 18; i., 37, 4; i., 62, 13; i., 80, 10; ii., 18, 7; ii., 23, 1, 2; ii., 39, 8; iii., 12, 5; iii., 51, 6; iv., 16, 20-1; iv., 22, 1; vi., 69, 7; vii., 22, 9; vii., 77, 4; viii., 78, 3; x., 13, 1; x., 54, 6; x., 89, 3; x., 105, 8.
132. R.V., i., 80, 1; ii., 2, 5; x., 85, 3; ii., 39, 1; vii., 42, 1; viii., 81, 30; ix., 112, 1; x., 85, 29; vii., 103, 1.
133. *Ibid.,* viii., 51, 4; vi., 16, 21.
134. *Ibid.,* vi., 75, 19.

135. *Ibid.*, x., 125, 5.
136. *Ibid.*, viii., 16, 7; x., 107, 6.
137. A.V., x., 7, 17, 24, 32.
138. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* viii., 21, 7, 3.
139. *Aitareya Up.*, ii., 4, 1, 1.
140. *Ibid.*, ii., 6, 5, 6.
141. *Chānd. Up.*, iii., 14, 1, 2.
142. *Muṇḍak. Up.*, ii., 1, 1.
143. *Maitr. Br. Up.*, 5, 1.
144. *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.*, p. 223.
145. *Kaṭha. Up.*, ii., 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14; 6, 1.
146. *Kaṭha. Up.*, i., 3, 15.
147. *Muṇḍaka Up.*, ii., 1, 2.
148. *Śvetāśvatara Up.*, v. 10.
149. *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief.*
150. *Bṛh. Ar.*, iii., 9, 26.
151. "These rude bards have not analysed their consciousness; the material and the spiritual are still blended together in their conceptions." (Johnson's *Asiatic Religions*).
152. Max Müller's *Hibbert Lectures,* p. 38.
153. "With the first development of consciousness, there grows up, as a part of it, the innate feeling that our life, natural and spiritual, is not in our power to sustain or prolong; that there is One above us on whom we are dependent, whose existence is One above us on whom we are dependent, whose existence we learn, and whose presence we realise, by the sure instinct of prayer." Again, "We are compelled by the constitution of our mind to believe in the existence of an Absolute and Infinite Being, —a belief which appears forced upon us as the complement of our consciousness of the relative and the finite" (Mansel's *Bampton Lectures,* pp. 81, 45). And Sir William Hamilton, though maintaining that "the absolute is conceived merely by a negative of conceivability," remarks that, "by a wonderful revelation we are thus in the very

consciousness of our inability to conceive aught above the relative and finite, inspired with a belief in the existence of something unconditioned, beyond the sphere of all comprehension" And herbert Spencer says, "Besides that definite consciousness of which Logic formulates the laws, there is also an *indefinite* consciouness which cannot be formulated. Besides complete thoughts, and besides the thoughts which, though incomplete, admit of completion, there are thoughts which it is impossible to complete, and yet which are still real, in the sense that they are normal affections of the mind." (*First Principles,* p. 88).

154. "Veneration or gratitude towards any being implies belief in the conscious action of that being, implies ascription of a prompting motive of a high kind, and deeds resulting from it; gratitude cannot be entertained towards something which is unconscious." (Herbert Spencer, *Nineteenth Century,* for July, 1884).
155. Mansel's *Bampton Lectures,* pp. 57, 58.
156. The religious sentiment, as Mansel says, "which impels men to believe in and worship a Supreme Being, is an evidence of His existence, but not an exhibition of His character". And again, "The conviction that an Infinite Being exists seems forced upon us by the manifest incompleteness of our finite knowledge, but we have no rational means whatever of determining what is the nature of that Being.
157. "It is rigorously impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of Appearances only, without at the same time conceiving a Reality of which they are appearances, for appearance without reality is unthinkable." (Herbert Spencer's *First Principles,* p. 88).
158. R.V., viii., 30, 1.
159. *Ibid.,* v., 13, 6.
160. *Ibid.,* i., 115, 1.
161. *Ibid.,* ix., 96, 5, 6.

162. *Ibid.,* x., 82, 1, 3.
163. *Ibid.,* 113, 19.
164. R.V., x., 72, 4, 5.
165. *Ibid.,* ii., 1, 3; v., 3, 1.
166. *Ibid.,* iv., 26, 1.
167. Dr. Christlieb's *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief,* p. 78.
168. Herbert Spencer says, "Positive knowledge does not, and never can, fill the whole region of possible thought. At the uttermost reach of discovery there arises, and must ever arise, the question—What lies beyond? As it is impossible to think of a limit to space so as to exclude the idea of space lying outside that limit, so we cannot conceive of any explanation profound enough to exclude the question—What is the explanation of the explanation?" (*First Principles,* p. 88).
169. Hobbes calls the idea of the Infinite an asburd speech, because we have no conception of anything, we call *infinite* (*Leviathan,* i., 3). What Herbert Spencer says of the "Absolute" is an answer to Hobbes, substituting the "Infinite" for the "Absolute". "To say that we cannot know the 'Infinite' is by implication to afirm that there is an Infinite. In the very denial of our power to learn *what* the Infinite is, there lies hidden the assumption *that it is,* and the making of this assumption proves that the Infinite has been present to the mind, not as nothing, but as something." (*First Principles,* p. 88).
170. R.V., ii., 27, 10; v., 85, 3; vii., 87, 6; iii., 54, 18.
171. R.V., vi., 70, 1, 2.
172. *Ibid.,* viii., 42, 1; vii., 60, 3, 6; i., 50, 2, 7
173. *Ibid.,* x., 129.
174. *Ibid.,* i., 115, 1; x., 170, 4.
175. *Ibid.,* i., 115, 1,; vii., 63, 2, 4.
176. R.V., i., 50, 10; viii., 90, 12. See Professor Max Müller's *Hibbert Lectures.*

177. "It is clear that the Authors (of the Hymns) had not attained to a distinct and logical comprehension of the characteristics which they ascribed to the objects of their adoration. On the one hand, the attributes of infinity, omnipotence, omnipresence, are ascribed to different beings, or to the same being under the various names of Puruṣa, Skambha, Brahma, Hiraṇyagarbha, etc. And yet, in other places, these qualities are represented as subject to limitations, and those divine beings themselves are said to expand by food, to be produced from other beings as (Puruṣa from Virāj), to be sacrified, to be produced from tapas, or to perform tapas." (Muir's *Sanskrit Texts,* vol. v., p. 411).
178. Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*.
179. *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad, i., 6; ii., 2, 3.
180. Gough's *Philosophy of the Upanishads,* p. 104.
181. Pp. 41, 42.
182. *Bampton Lectures,* p. 57.
183. The oldest record of man in Genesis represents him as created in the image of God, and holding intercourse with his Creator as a son with his father. And the traditions of all nations testify to a golden age in the far-off past, when men lived happily in converse with God. Max Müller says, "It is a constant saying among African tribes, that 'formerly Heaven was nearer to men than it is now; that the highest God, the Creator, Himself, gave formerly lessons of wisdom to human beings; but that after wards He withdrew from them, and dwells now far from them in Heaven'. The Hindus say the same (R.V., i., 179, 2; vii., 76, 4); and they, as well as the Greeks, appeal to their ancestors, who had lived in closer community with the gods, as their authority on what they believe about the gods" (*Hibbert Lectures,* p. 175). And the Duke of Argyll says, that "Everywhere in the imagination and tradition of mankind there is preserved the memory and

the belief in a pst better than the present. It is not easy to conceive how a belief so universal could have arisen, unless as a survival. It has all the marks of being a memory, and not an imagination." (*Contemporary Review,* for June, 1881).

184. "If we neglect a garden plant, then a natural principle of deterioration comes in, and changes it into a worse plant. And if we neglect a bird, by the same imperious law it will be gradually changed into an uglier bird. Or if we neglect almost any of the domestic animals, they will rapidly revert to wild and worthless forms again.

"Man is no exception to this law. If a man neglect himself for a few years, he will chage into a worse man and a lower man. If it is his body that he neglects, he will deteriorate into a wild and bestial savage – like the dehumanised men who are discovered sometimes upon desert islands. If it is his mind, it will degenerate into imbecility and madness. If he neglect his con-science, it will run off into lawlessness and vice. Or, lastly, if it is his soul, it must inevitably atrophy, drop off in ruin and decay" (Prof. Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World,* p. 99). Under the operation of this law, it is possible for those who have been blessed with Old Testament Revelation to become so degraded as to lose all knowledge of God. Mr. A.S. Anand, the agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland for North China, met the descendants of some Jews in Honan, who Șcould not give him the faintest idea of what they believed". "They seem to have entirely given up their old worship, have lost all knowledge of the God of Israel, and have nothing but the memory of what they once were to distinguish them." Their forefathers entered China during the Han Dynasty, B.C. 200 to A.D. 220.

189. Romans, i., 25.

190. To say that primitive man was too low down in the scale of evolution to receive religious conceptions, such as the

doctrine of a "primitive revelation" implies, is no valid objection against the theory. For man must have always possessed the chief characteristic which distinguishes him from all other creatures, viz., *mind*, the power of thinking, or, as Locke says, of having general ideas.

191. *Essays,* vol. ii., p. 51.
192. Max Müller's *Introduction to the Science of Religion,* p. 250.
193. The Duke of Argyll, in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1881.

CHAPTER III

THE COSMOLOGY OF THE VEDAS

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
—GENESIS

1. Vedic Cosmology not one Connected Narrative

The cosmology of the Vedas is not one connected narrative, like that of the Bible, but many narratives, or *hints,* given by different poets at different times, extending over a period of many centuries. The Ṛṣis, in attempting to construct a cosmology, or in reproducing the almost forgotten traditions of the creation handed down from the ancestral home, necessarily gave their own conceptions, more or less coloured, according to their individual idiosyncrasies and the exigency of poetic language, which, according to Hindu notions, consists not so much in truth as in *rasa,* flavour or sensation. It is too much, therefore, to expect harmony between the various narratives, or even always between all the statements of any one poet in the same narrative. All that we can do is to analyse the different accounts, and point out the fundamental conceptions which underlie them, omitting what appears either too obscure for explanation, or too puerile for remark.

2. Creation the Work of an Intelligent Being

All Vedic cosmologies recognise an omnipotent-intelli-

gent being as the Author of the Universe. That being is represented under names as various as those of the Hindu gods. For every god in the Vedic pantheon was in his turn regarded as supreme, and, as such, the Author of the Universe. "All-seeing Viśvakarman produced the earth, and disclosed the sky by his might."[1] "He who produced heaven and earth must have been the most skilful artisan of all the gods."[2] "Desire arose in 'that one,' who was before all things, and this the wise have discerned to be the bond between nonentity and entity."[3] "Brahmanaspati blew forth all the births of the gods like a blacksmith."[4] "Hiraṇyagarbha, the one born lord of things existing, arose in the beginning and established the earth and the sky."[5] "Prajāpati established all the worlds, and produced from his upper and lower breaths both gods and mortal creatures."[6] "Skamba established the earth, the sky, and the six wide regions."[7] "Varuṇa, by his might, propped asunder the wide firmaments; he lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth."[8] Indra established the earth and this sky, and, wonder working, produced the sun and the dawn."[9] "Sūrya, the most active of the active gods, produced the heaven and the earth, which are beneficent to all."[10] "Agni upheld the broad earth, he supported the sky with true hymns."[11] "In the beginning Brahma was the source of all things. He created the gods and placed them in this world, in the atmosphere, and in the sky."[12] "Rohita established heaven and earth, by him the sky was supported, by him the heaven."[13]

While all Vedic cosmologies agree in ascribing the production of the Universe to an omnipotent intelligent being, they differ as to the *mode* in which he produced it. Some represent it as the result of his power without pre-existing matter or creation, others, as the result of his power acting on eternally pre-existing matter or creation, and others represent it as a phenomenal emanation from the deity.

3. Creation out of Nothing

The 129th hymn of the tenth book of the Ṛg-Veda is the most striking illustration of this. "(1) There was then neither non-entity nor entity; there was no atmosphere nor sky above. What enveloped (all)? Where, in the receptacle of what (was it contained)?[14] Was it water, the deep abyss? (2) Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of clay or night. That One breathed calmly by itself;[15] there was nothing different from It (that one), or beyond It. (3) Darkness there was; originally enveloped in darkness, this Universe was undistinguishable water;[16] the empty (mass) which was concealed by a husk (or by nothingness) was produced, single, by the power of austerity (or fervour). (4) Desire first arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind. This the wise, seeking in their heart, have discovered by the intellect to be the bond between nonentity and entity. (5) The ray which shot across these things—was it above or was it below? There were productive energies and mighty powers; nature *(svadhā)* beneath, and energy *(prayati)* above. (6) Who knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence this creation? The gods are subsequent to its formation; who then knows from what it arose? (7) From what source this creation arose, and whether (any one) created it or not? He who in the highest heaven is its ruler, he verily knows, or (even) he does not know."

This hymn carries us back to a time long before the first verse in Genesis, when there was neither "nonentity (asad) nor entity (sad)". From the inability of the human mind to conceive a state that was neither nothing nor something,[17] the Atharva-Veda identifies this remote "nonentity" with Skamba, a personification of the divine power which supports the Universe; and the Chāndogya

Upaniṣad doubts that there ever was a period without entity.[218] The Vedantists explain *sad* as the Supreme Being manifesting himself by creation; and *asad* as mere forms or illusions by which he deceives the senses. What then does the poet mean by the phrase, "There was then neither non-entity nor entity"? Does he mean to say that there was neither absolutely? So evidently thought the sages of the Atharva-Veda, and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. But this is a mistake; for he postulates the existence of "that One breathing breathless by Itself," *i.e.,* the unconditioned existing alone by his own inherent power, without the accidents of time and space, which are the conditions of our life.[19] Does he mean that there was neither *relatively?* This, doubtless, is his meaning; and in this sense the phrase is perfectly true, for we can know neither "entity" nor "non-entity," except as they are related to one another. The existence of the one necessarily implies the existence of the other; and hence without a knowledge of both we can know neither.[20] And since there was then no entity, no trace, no atom of what afterwards became the world, the poet asserts, with a philosophical precision with which we are scarcely prepared to meet in that remote age, "there was neither nonentity nor entity". This meaning is confirmed by R.V., x., 72, 2, "In the former age of the gods, the existent sprang from the non-existent," *i.e.,* whatever now visibly exists had at one time no existence; and by the Śat. Br., vi., 1, "In the beginning, this Universe was indeed non-existent"; as well as by the Aitareya Āraṇyaka," Originally this (Universe) was indeed soul only; nothing else whatever existed active or inactive". In the same sense the poet declares that there was neither "death" nor "immortality"; for the one is the negative of the other, and, hence, without a knowledge of both we can know neither; and since there was no "death," inasmuch as there was nothing to die, there could have been no "immortality," or the opposite of death.

Between the statements made in the first two and the third verses, we must logically place the action of the fourth verse, which produced the "undistinguishable water" of the third; an action identical with the creative act of Genesis, i., 1, which produced "the heaven and the earth" in a chaotic state. The cause of this action was the determination of the Infinite will. "Desire arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind;" *i.e.,* which to us is the first manifestation of conscious mind. "This the wise, seeking in their heart, have discerned by the intellect to be the bond between non-entity and entity;" *i.e.,* the will of God was the cause of the existent springing from the non-existent. This is only another form of the Hebrew expression, "And God said, Let there be ... and there was". The same idea is expressed in the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, "He thought, I will create worlds, thus he created these various worlds, water, light, mortal beings, and the waters". And in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, "Prajāpati was, in the beginning, but one. He uttered the Nivid (a sacrificial formula), and all things were created." Again, "The word is the Creator of the Universe, the powerful one; for by the word is all this made" *(vaca hidattaṁ sarvaṁ kṛtaṁ).*[21] How wonderfully this language agrees with the declaration of the Psalmist, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth". "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and they were created."[22] The same idea is also found among the Iranians and the semi-civilised races of Western Australia. In the sacred books of the former, it is said that Ahura-Mazda created the world by means of the *Yathā-ahū-vairyō* prayer; and the Roman Catholic missionaries ascertained that the latter believe in an omnipotent Being, who created the heaven and the earth by breathing, whose name is Motogon. To create the

earth, he said, "Earth, come forth! And he breathed, and the earth was created. So with the sun, moon, and all things."[23]

The water and the darkness of this hymn correspond to the *thohu vabohu,* "without form and void," of Genesis, and to the chaos of the Greeks. "This Universe was undistinguishable water enveloped in darkness." It was an "empty" or "shapeless mass," concealed by the "deep abyss," like grain in the husk, but brought forth as a beautiful world by "the power of austerity," or "contemplation," as Colebrooke translates it; *i.e.,* by the mighty will of "That One" who designed it. For "there were productive energies and mighty powers"; *svadhā,* nature, beneath, and *prayati,* energy, above. Yes, there was *svadhā,* or chaos, beneath, and there was the mighty "energy" of the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters above, bringing order from confusion, cosmos from chaos, and breathing forth light and life everywhere.[24]

Max Müller and Monier Williams see in *svadhā,* beneath, and *prayati,* above, the first dim outline of the idea that the Creator willed to produce the Universe through the agency and co-operation of a female principle, an idea which afterwards acquired more shape in the supposed marriage of heaven and earth. It is more probable that this idea originated in a *misunderstanding* of this hymn, or of the tradition on which it is based.

The poet closes his sublime narrative of the creation in an unexpectedly *sad* and disappointing tone. After the graphic description he has given of the origin of the Universe, he finishes by intimating that he does not know after all "from what source this creation arose, and whether any one created it or not". All he can affirm with confidence is, that "He who is in the highest heaven is its ruler, he verily knows, or (even) he does not know". Another poet, in the same

melancholy strain of ignorance and uncertainty, asks, "What was the forest, what was the tree, from which they fashioned the heaven and the earth? Inquire mentally, ye sages, what that was on which he took his stand when establishing the worlds."[25] And similarly another poet, "Which of these two (heaven and earth) was the first, and which the last? How have they been produced? declare, sages, who knows this?" [26] What a sad comment this is on the words of the Apostle Paul, "The world by wisdom knew not God"![27] Religious truths beyond the range of experience cannot be known with that degree of certainty which can satisfy the human mind, except by an authoritative Revelation from the Author of our being. Even Socrates declared that he "knew only this, that he knew nothing!"

This is the most ancient, and the most vivid, reproduction of the primitive creed respecting the origin of the Universe. It contains all the essential elements of the Mosaic narrative, differing only in being more vague, and in being given with less certainty. The fundamental idea, that the eternally self-existent One created the world by the power of His own will, without pre-existing matter, and the chro-nological order – first, will or desire, then chaos or undigested matter, and, lastly, this beautiful world – are identical in both. Now, this idea of creation from nothing cannot be accounted for on natural grounds, for there is nothing in nature to indicate that something can be produced from nothing. The constitution of the human mind is such that it cannot think of anything beginning to exist in essence, but only in form. It is evident, therefore, that the idea of creation from nothing is not the product of reason, but of divine Revelation.

We learn from the old Norse Eddas of Iceland, that the Teutonic Āryans carried away from the original home the

same belief in the origin of the Universe. The first poem in the first part of the Elder Edda, which contains the oldest traditions of the Germanic races, is the Valupsa, or wisdom of Vala. Vala was a prophetess, and thus describes the creation of the world :

"I command the devout attention of all noble souls,
Of all the high and the low of the race of Heimdall;
I tell the doings of the All Father,
In the most ancient sagas which come to my mind."

"There was an age in which Ymir lived,
When was no sea, nor shore, nor salt waves;
No earth below, nor heaven above;
No yawning abyss and no grassy land."

"Till the sons of Bors lifted the dome of heaven,
And created the vast Midgard (earth) below;
When the sun of the south rose above the mountains,
And green grasses made the ground verdant."

4. Creation from Pre-existing Matter

"(1) Hiraṇyagarbha arose in the beginning; he was the one born lord of things existing. He established the earth and this sky : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (2) He who gives breath, who gives strength, whose command all (even) the gods reverence, whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (3) Who by his might became the sole king of the breathing and winking world, who is the lord of this two-footed and four-footed (creation) : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (4) Whose greatness these snowy mountains, and the sea with the rasa (river) declare, of whom these snowy regions, of whom they are the arms : to what god shall we offer our

oblation? (5) By whom the sky is fiery and the earth fixed, by whom the firmament and the heaven were established, who in the atmosphere is the measurer of aerial space : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (6) To whom heaven and earth, sustained by his succour, looked up, trembling in mind; over whom the sun shines : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (7) When the great waters pervaded the Universe, containing an embryo and generating Agni, thence arose the one spirit (*asu*) of the gods : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (8) He who through his greatness beheld the waters which contained power, and generated sacrifice, who was the one god above gods: to what god shall we offer our oblation? (9) May he not injure us, he who is the generator of the earth, who, ruling by fixed ordinances, produced the heavens, who formed the great and brilliant waters : to what god shall we offer our oblation? (10) Prajāpati, no other than thou is lord over all these created things; may we obtain that through desire of which we have invoked thee; may we become masters of riches."[28]

Max Müller says, respecting this hymn, that "the idea of one god is expressed with such power and decision, that it will make us hesitate before we deny to the Āryan nations an instinctive monotheism"; and Monier Williams remarks, that "it furnishes a good argument for those who maintain that the purer faith of the Hindus is properly monotheistic."[29]

"The whole of this hymn is found repeated in the Vājasaneyī-Saṁhitā of the Yajur-Veda, and most of the verses recur in the Atharva-Veda."[30] The last verse is rejected by most critics as being the production of a later age.

According to this hymn, the creator, Hiraṇyagarbha, arose in the beginning from the great waters which pervaded the Universe, the "undistinguishable water" of R.V., x.,

129, 3, or chaos, and so became "the one born lord of things existing". The idea is that the primeval waters generated a "golden embryo," and that from this "embryo" the creator was born, or took bodily form, in order to transform chaos into cosmos: and hence he is denominated Hiraṇyagarbha, the "golden embryo," which also may be translated, "the golden or the bright child". And hence it is said in the Atharva-Veda, "In the beginning, the waters producing a child, brought forth an embryo, which, as it was coming into life, was enveloped in a golden covering".[31]

From this it appears (1) that when Hiraṇyagarbha was born the Universe was in a chaotic state, pervaded with water, (2) that he rose from an embryo generated by the waters when the earth was "void and without form"; and (3) that he made the world into its present form from the existing shapeless chaos "For he who is god above all gods established the earth and the sky;" he "formed the brilliant waters" and "the snowy mountains"; and hence all creation unite in "declaring his greatness"

Was this chaos eternally self-existent independently of Hiraṇyagarbha? or was there a time in the unspeakable past when he produced it? or did the chaotic waters by some unknown law of development gradually and spontaneously produce him? or were both eternally and independently co-existent? It appears from this hymn that both were regarded as eternally and independently! co-existent. It is stated in the eighth verse that Hiraṇyagarbha "through his greatness beheld the waters which contained power," *i.e.*, "the great waters" of verse seven which "pervaded the Universe," or chaos. He must have beheld these before he was born from the golden embryo; for the "great waters" of these verses are different from the "great and brilliant waters" of verse nine. The former are the great primeval waters from which . .

world was made; and the latter are the seas, the lakes, and the rivers, "formed" by the Creator. Of course it might be affirmed that he beheld the great chaotic waters after he was born; but the former view is more in harmony with other Vedic passages. The Atharva-Veda, iv., 2, 6, says, "In the beginning the waters, immortal, and versed in the sacred ceremonies, covered the Universe containing an embryo – over these divine waters was the god," *i.e.,* before he was born in the embryo. Here both the Creator and the immortal waters are represented as separate independent existencies in the "beginning," and presumably from eternity.[32] The same idea appears in R.V., x., 82, "That which is beyond the sky, beyond this earth, beyond gods and spirits; what earliest embryo did the waters contain, in which all the gods were beheld? The waters contained that earliest embryo in which all the gods were collected." One receptacle rested upon the navel of the unborn, wherein all the worlds stood. "Ye know not him who produced all things." What the earliest embryo contained, in which all the gods were collected (inasmuch as it contained their creator, "the sole life of the bright gods") was "that which is beyond the sky, beyond this earth, beyond gods and spirits" – he who "produced these things," and not he who was produced by them. Here, again, the existence of the Author of the Universe is represented as separate from, and independent of, the original chaos. The same idea underlies R.V., x., 72, 6, 7, "When, gods, ye moved, agitated upon those waters, then a violent dust issued from you, as from dancers. When, gods, ye, like strenuous men, replenished the worlds, then ye drew forth the sun which was hidden in the (aerial?) ocean." And also the Taittīrya Āraṇyaka, i., 23, 1, "This was water. Prajāpati was produced on a lotus leaf. Within his mind desire arose, 'Let me create'." Besides, Varuṇa, Indra, and others, are represented as

establishing and supporting the heavens above, fixing and directing the sun in the sky, and setting limits to the earth; thus assuming that the objects themselves, in some shape, were pre-existent.

It should be observed, however, that there is a legend in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,[33] in which the primeval waters are represented as generating an egg, and the egg bringing forth Prajāpati, the creator of the world. "In the beginning, this Universe was waters, nothing but water. The waters desired, 'how can we produce?' So saying, they toiled, they performed austerity. While they were performing austerity, a golden egg came into existence. From it, in a year, a man *(puruṣa)* came into existence, who was Prajāpati. He divided this golden egg. There was then no resting-place for him. He therefore floated about for the space of a year, occupying this golden egg. In a year he desired to speak. He uttered *bhuḥ,* which became this earth; *būvaḥ,* which became this firmament; and *svaha,* which became that sky."[34]

In this account, probably, the author of the primeval waters is overlooked rather than denied. For certain it is that this materialistic doctrine was never popular in India. Hindus of the Vedic age believed either in creation from nothing by the exertion of divine power, or in creation from chaos after the birth of the Creator from the "golden embryo," or in creation as a phenomenal emanation; and *post*-Vedic cosmologies combine the two first, with the exception of the Vedānta, which adopts the last.

There is another legend in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa contradicting this, in which the gods are said to have made Prajāpati, that he generated the waters; and desiring to be reproduced from them, that he entered the waters, when an egg arose. "He pondered on it. He said, 'Let there be, let there be!' Again : 'Let there be!' and all things appeared."

According to Manu, the Harivaṁśa, and the Purāṇas, the deity was prior to chaos; he created the primeval waters by a thought, and deposited a seed in them, which became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun, in which he himself was born as Brahma, the progenitor of all worlds.... (5) "This Universe was enveloped in darkness, unperceived, undistinguishable, undiscerniible, unknowable, as it were entirely sunk in sleep. (6) Then the irresistible self-existent lord, undiscerned, causing this Universe with the five elements and all other things to become discernible, was manifested dispelling the gloom. (7) He who is beyond the cognisance of the senses, subtle, undiscernible, eternal, who is the essence of all beings, and inconceivable, himself shone forth. (8) He, desiring to produce various creatures from his own body, first with a thought created the waters, and deposited in them a seed. (9) This (seed) became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun, in which he himself was born as Brahma, the progenitor of all the worlds.[35] (10) The waters are called *nara,* because they are the offspring of *Nara*; and since they were formerly his receptacle, he is therefore called Nārāyaṇa. (11) Being formed by that first cause, undiscernible, eternal, which is both existent and non-existent, that male *(puruṣa)* is known in the world as Brahmā. (12) That lord, having continued a year in the egg, divided it into two parts by his mere thought. (13) With these two shells he formed the heaven and the earth; and in the middle he placed the sky, the eight regions, and the eternal abode of the waters." [36]

In the ninth hymn of the tenth book of the Ṛg-Veda, the gods are represented as having fashioned the Universe from the dismembered limbs of Puruṣa,. the primeval male, whom they sacrificed. "The moon was produced from his mind *(manas),* the sun *(sūrya)* from his eye, Indra and Agni from his mouth, and Vāyu from his breath. From his navel came the

atmosphere, from his head the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ears the four quarters; so they formed the worlds." From him also were produced the different castes and animals.

It is obvious that this second narrative of the creation is a corruption of the first. The hymns containing it are of later date, which is proved by the abstract names of the gods mentioned in them, such as Hiraṇyagarbha, Viśvakarman, and Prajāpati. The primitive narrative was either greatly obscured in the memory of, or partly rejected by, the propounders of this theory. That God produced the chaotic fluid before He formed the world, was either forgotten or rejected, on the ground that it was contrary to experience to produce something out of nothing. Hence chaos is represented as existing together with, and independently of, the Creator; and the Creator, as assuming discernible form in a "golden embryo" in order to fashion the Universe. According to this theory, He is nothing more than the architect or the maker of the world from pre-existing matter. This was also the Zend idea of creation, and hence the phrase "created by Mazda," is Mazdadhata, established or arranged by Mazda. And the "firmament," the "infinite time," and the "air which works on high," are called "self-created" .

The idea that the Creator rose from a "golden embryo," or a "golden egg," probably originated in a dim recollection of the primitive account that the "Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters".[37] For the Hebrew verb, *recaph,* translated "moved," means to "flutter," to "hover," and to "brood" as of a bird over its nest. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young," etc.[38] The word translated "fluttereth" here is the same as that translated "moved" in Genesis, i., 2. If, therefore, the primitive account was, that God, in fashioning the world, "fluttered" or "brooded" over chaos, like a bird over its nest, what was more natural than

that, in the course of time, the simile involved in the action should have been forgotten, and God actually made to rise from the "golden embryo," or to be born from the "golden egg," generated by the waters?

And as the Teutonic Āryans carried away to the north of Europe the'primitive belief respecting the creation of the world, so the Greek Āryans carried away to the south the more recent, or elaborated there a similar theory. Plato says, "that all wise men, with the exception of Parmenides, thought that all things proceeded from water, and that generation was a sort of flowing motion". Aristophanes gives the particulars as follows :

"First all was chaos; one confused heap;
Darkness enwrapped the disagreeing deep;
In a mixed crowd the jumbling elements were,
Nor earth, nor air, nor heaven did appear;
Till in this horrid vast abyss of things,
Teeming night, spreading o'er her cold black wings,
Laid the first egg; whence after time's due course,
Issued forth love (the world's prolific source),
Glistening with golden wings; which fluttering o'er
Dark chaos, gendered all the numerous store Of animals and gods".

Here night and chaos are represented as the first substances existing alone. They laid an egg, whence love was produced, – the "desire" of R.V., x., 129,4, and the golden child" of R.V., x., 121, 1, and the "Spirit of God" of Genesis, i., 2, – which, fluttering o'er dark chaos, gendered heaven, earth, animals, and gods.

It should be stated that Hindu Puṇḍits do not believe

that the Vedas contain two or more theories of the creation of the world. They maintain that there is only one theory, viewed from different standpoints. Hence they, explain "non-entity" as a state in which name and form *(nama* and *rūpa)* were not developed, and not an absolute nullity like that indicated in the phrase, "a hare's horns"; and Hiraṇyagarbha, born from the "golden embryo," they represent as the abstract neuter Brahma, assuming personality in the form of the male Brahmā, in order to transform what was neither "non-entity" nor "entity" into the visible Universe, having names and forms, such as earth, sky, and water. This, however, is a speculation of a later age, when the simple meaning of the hymns had been forgotten, and the Hindu mind had become profoundly affected with philosophy.

5. Creation a Phenomenal Emanation from the Deity

When the sages of the Upaniṣads had attained the highest philosophical unity, when they had merged all the elemental gods, and all existences, material, mental, and spiritual, in one great entity, *ātma, Brahma, Prāṇa, Puruṣa,* or *Sat,* there was no room for a real objective creation, such as the two we have already considered. What we call creation, therefore, was conceived of as a kind of phenomenal emanation; or illusory manifestation, of the one great reality. Nothing really exists except the great Spirit or Self; and the Universe is nothing more than its manifestation, its body, which it draws from its own substance, and again absorbs into it, as the spider spins forth and draws back the thread of its web.[39] "This whole Universe is filled by this Person *(puruṣa),* to whom there is nothing superior, from whom there is nothing different, than whom there is nothing smaller or larger; who stands alone, fixed like a tree in the sky." "By means of thoughts, touching, seeing, and passions, the incarnate self assumes successivey in various places various forms, in

accordance with his deeds, just as the body grows when food and drink are poured into it." "That incarnate self, according to his own qualities, chooses (assumes) many shapes, coarse or subtle; and having himself caused his union with them, he is seen as another and another, through the qualities of his acts, and through the qualities of his body."[40] And so this great Ātma is both the material and efficient cause of all finite existences. "As from blazing fire, sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousandfold, thus are the various beings brought forth from the imperishable, and return hither also." "The sky is his head, his eyes the sun and the moon, the quarters his ears, his speech the Vedas, the wind his breath, his heart the Universe; from his feet came the earth; he is indeed the inner Self of all things."[41] "As all spokes are contained in the nave and in the felloes of a wheel, all beings and all selfs are contained in that Self."[42]

Professor Max Müller, in his Introduction to vol. i of the *Sacred Books of the East,* says, that "Ātman was looked upon at the same time as the starting-point of all phenomenal existence, the root of the world, the only thing that could truly be said to be, to be real and true. As the root of all that exists, the Ātman was identified with the Brahman, which in Sanskrit is both masculine and neuter, and with the *Sat*, which is neuter only, —that which is, or Saty, the true, the real. It alone exists in the beginning, and for ever; it has no second. Whatever else is said to exist, derives its real being from the *Sat*. How the one *Sat* becomes many, how what we call creation, which they call emanation , constantly proceeds and returns to it, has been explained in various more or less fanciful ways by ancient prophets and poets. But what they all agree in is this, that 'the whole creation, all plants, all animals, all men, are due to the one *Sat*, are upheld by it, and will return to it'."

This theory of creation is the logical outcome of Monism or Pantheism. And as Monism or Pantheism is far inferior, from a religious point of view, to the idea of personal gods, however imperfect, so we may remark that this theory of creation is equally inferior to either of the two older ones which appear in the Ṛg-Veda.

The identity of cause and effect, of subject and object, which appears in the Upaniṣads, was made the fundamental doctrine of the Vedānta or non-dual philosophy, a philosophy the most *widely accepted in India* at the present day.

REFERENCES

1. R.V., x., 81, 2.
2. *Ibid.,* i., 160, 4.
3. *Ibid.,* x., 129, 4.
4. *Ibid.,* x., 72, 2.
5. *Ibid.,* x., 121, 1.
6. *Śat. Br.,* x., 1, 3, 1.
7. A.V., x., 7, 35.
8. R.V., vii., 86, 1.
9. *Ibid.,* iii., 32, 8.
10. R.-V., i., 160, 4.
11. *Ibid.,* i., 67, 3.
12. *Śat. Br.,* xi., 2, 3, 1.
13. A.V., xiii., 7.
14. "What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter?" (*Griffith*).
15. "Breathed without afflatino, single with (*svadhā)* her who is sustained within him" (*Colebrooke*)
    "Breathed calmly, self-supported" (*Muir*).
    "Breathed breathless by itself" (*Max Müller*).
    "Breathed calmly, self-contained" (*M. Williams*).
16. "There was a time in which all was darkness and water." (*Babylonian Tradition of the Creation*).

17. "We are utterly unable to realise in thought the possibility of the complement of existence being either increased or diminished. We are unable, on the one hand, to conceive nothing becoming something, or, on the other, something becoming nothing." (Sir W. Hamilton's *Lectures on Metaphysics,* vol. ii., p. 377).
18. Muir's *Sans. Texts,* vol. iv., p. 20, 2nd ed.
19. So it is explained in the *Śat. Br.,* x., 5, 3, 1, "In the beginning this Universe was, as it were, and was not, as it were. Then it was only that mind. Wherefore it has been declared by the Ṛṣi, 'there was then neither non-entity nor entity,' for the mind was, as it were, neither entity nor non-entity."
20. "The judgment cannot affirm or deny one notion of another, except by uniting the two, in one individisble act of comparison." (Sir W. Hamilton's *Lectures on Metaphysics,* vol. i., p. 68).
21. *S. P. Br.,* viii., 1, 3, 9.
22. Ps., xxxiii., 6, 9; cxlviii., 5.
23. Max Müller's *Hibbert Lectures,* pp. 16, 17.
24. In the *Taittīrīya Saṁhitā,* vi., 4-8, we read, "This world had neither day nor night, but was (in that respect) undistinguished". The gods said to Mitra and Varuṇa, "Make a separation. . . . Mitra produced the day, and Varuṇa the night" (Muir's *S. T.,* vol. v., p. 59); and in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* we read, "Self brooded over the water". From the water thus brooded on, matter (*murti*) was born.
25. R.V., x., 81, 4.
26. *Ibid.,*i., 185, 1.
27. 1. Cor., i., 21.
28. R.V., x., 121.
29. *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.,* p. 568; *Indian Wisdom,* p. 23.
30. Muir's *Sans. Texts,* vol. iv., p. 15.
31. *Ibid.,* vol. iv., Ist edition.
32 *Śvetāśvatara Up., v.,* 13.
33. *Ś.* Br. i., 1, 1, 3.

34. Muir's *Sans. Texts,* vol. iv., p. 22.
35. Kullūka, an old commentator, thus annotates on verse nine, "That seed became a golden egg," etc. That seed, by the will of the deity, became a golden egg. Golden, *i.e.,* as it were, golden, from the quality of purity attaching to it, and not really golden; for since the author proceeds to describe the formation of the earth from one of the halves of its shell, and we know by ocular proof that the earth is not golden, we see that a mere figure of speech is here employed. . . . In that egg Hiraṇyagarbha was produced, *i.e.,* entering into the soul—which was invested in a subtle body—of that person by whom in a former birth the deity was worshipped, with a contemplation on distinctness and identity, expressed in the words, "I am Hiraṇyagarbha, the Supreme Spirit himself, become manifested in the form of Hiraṇyagarbha".
36. Manu.
37. Genesis, i., 2.
38. Deut., xxxii., II.
39. *Bṛhadāryaṇaka Up.*, ii., 2, 2.
40. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, iii., 9; v., 11, 12.
41. *Muṇḍaka Up.*, ii. 1, 4.
42. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, ii., 5, 15.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE VEDAS

"There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun." —SIR THOMAS BKOWNE

"The proper study of mankind is man." —POPE

1. The Origin and Dignity of Man

The Vedic Āryans were conscious of a divine origin. They felt that they were intimately connected with a father *above,* while they acknowledged that they sprang from the earth beneath. *Dyauṣ pitaḥ, pṛithivi māta,* Dyauṣ, Heaven, is the father, and Pṛithivi, the broad earth, is the mother. "Hear us, Indra, like a father,"[1] for "we have no other friend but thee, no other happiness, no other father".[2] Again, "We are thine, Maghavan, satisfy the desires of these thy worshippers".[3]

Man everywhere is conscious of a higher, as well as of a lower, origin; of a genesis from heaven, as well as from earth. Plato says, "And the earth as the mother brought forth men, but God was the shaper." And Kleanthes says, "For we are his offspring." And similarly Aratus, Tacitus tells us that the ancient Germans sang songs in honour of *Tuisco,* who sprang from the earth, and whose son was Manus. "Tuisconem

deum terra editum, et filium Manuum." Tuisco is from *Tu,* the same root as the Sanskrit *Dyu.* The Babylonian tradition of the creation of man represents him as having been formed from the blood of Belus, mixed with the earth; and hence as having sprung from God above and the earth beneath. And what is the tradition of a primitive golden age, found among all nations, but man's consciousness of a divine origin, manifesting itself through the gloom of the past and the degradation of the present?

The Hindu Āryans, recognising the pre-eminent dignity and nobility of man, distinguished him from all other creatures as the "Thinker". The first human being, the progenitor of the human race, they denominated *Manu*[4] from the root *man,* to "measure," to think, which appears in the Sanskrit *manas,* the Latin *mens,* and the English *mind* and *man.* What higher name could they have given to man than the "Thinker"? And in the case of the Āryan nations, what name could have been more prophetically significant? For have they not been pre-eminently the great Thinkers as well as the great actors in every age? Have they not far outstripped all other races in civilisation, in philosophy, in arts, and in science? Are they not to-day the rulers of the world, and is it presumptuous to affirm that they are destined, under Providence, to bind all nations together in the golden bonds of civilisation, commerce, and religion?

2. The Consciousness of Sin

Professor Weber says, "The religious notion of sin is wanting altogether, and submissive gratitude to the gods is as yet quite foreign to the Indian in the Vedic age".[5] Max Müller, on the other hand, says, "The consciousness of sin is a prominent feature in the religion of the Veda; so is, likewise, the belief that the gods are able to take away from man the heavy burden of his sin".[6] And the author of the *Sacred*

Poetry of Early Religions remarks, "Of that moral conviction, that moral enthusiasm for goodness and justice, that, moral hatred of wrong and evil, that zeal for righteousness, that anguish of penitence, which has elsewhere marked religious poetry, there is singularly little trace" in the Vedic hymns. The first of these statements is far too sweeping, the second is exaggerated as to the word "prominent," and the third is upon the whole correct.

The fact is, that when the Āryans appear first before us in the "Land of the five rivers," their consciousness of sin had become more obtuse than it was formerly; and hence the burden of their songs was not, "Lord, grant us forgiveness of sins," but, "grant us food, progeny, wealth, and victory". The following hymn, addressed to Indra, who was then their supreme deity, is a fair specimen of the spirit pervading three-fourths of the Vedic hymns :

1. "Voracious drinker of the Soma juice, although we be unworthy, do thou, Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."

2. "Thy benevolence, handsome and mighty, lord of food, endures for ever. Therefore, Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."

3. "Cast asleep (the two female messengers of Yama); looking at each other, let them sleep, never waking. Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."

4. "May those who are our enemies slumber, and those, O hero, who are our friends, be awake. Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."

5. "Indra, destroy this ass (our adversary), praising thee with such discordant speech; and do thou, Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."

6. "Let the (adverse) breeze, with crooked course, alight afar off on the forest. Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."

7. "Destroy every one that reviles us; stay every one that does us injury. Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses"[7]

The consciousness of sin, however, is a prominent feature in the *small* number of hymns addressed to Varuṇa, either alone or in conjunction with other deities, especially with the Ādityas, "the eternal ones"; and it occasionally manifests itself more or less clearly in hymns addressed to other gods. "This day, ye gods, with the rising sun, deliver us from heinous *sin*"[8] "Preserve us, O Agni, by knowledge from sin, consume every malignant spirit, raise us aloft that we may pass through the world, and that we may convey our wealth to the gods."[9] "Agni, far remove from us all iniquity, far remove from us sin, far remove from us all evil thought."[10] "The divine Sāvitri travels by an upward and by a downward path; he comes from a distance, removing all sin."[11] "If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have ever wronged a brother, friend or comrade, the neighbour ever with us, or a stranger, O Varuṇa, remove from us the trespass." "If we, as gamesters, cheat at play, have cheated, done wrong unwillingly or sinned of purpose, cast all these sins away like loosened fetters, and, Varuṇa, let us be thine own beloved."[12] "Let those renowns and those praises of thine be proved true by thy showing mercy on us, O Indra. Slay us not for one sin, nor for two, nor for three, nor for many, O hero."[13] "Protect us, Soma, from calumny; preserve us from sin; pleased with our service, be our friend."[14] "Prolong our existence, Aśvins; wipe away our sins; destroy our foes; be ever our associates."[15] "May our sins be removed or repented of" is the burden of a whole hymn.[16]

The Āryans' infantile notion of sin is forcibly expressed in the terms which they used to denote it. Those terms are *pāpa.*[17] from root *pat,* to "fall," to "fall down"; *aghas, enas* and *amchas,* from roots signifying first to "go," and then to" go astray," "miss the mark". *Nirṛti,* another word for sin, which was afterwards per sonified as a power of evil or destruction, is derived from the same root which yields *ṛta* in the sense of right; and *nir-ṛta* means not right, or a deviation from the right path. Sin, therefore, according to the earliest conception of the Āryan mind, is a fall from a higher to a lower moral state, a deviation from the path of duty, a missing of the mark of moral excellence once set before the mental vision. The same ideas are conveyed in the Tamil (Turanian) words *Tappu, Tappidam,* and *Kuttam,* sin, fault.

Words are fossilised thoughts; and their testimony respecting the earliest conceptions of the human mind is as valuable as the testimony of the rocks respecting the structure of animals which have long become extinct. What a marvellous confirmation of the Fall of man, mentioned in the third chapter of Genesis, we have in the words used for "sin" in the Semitic, Āryan, and Turanian languages!

If man, individually and socially as Evolutionists tell us, be nothing more than the product of natural forces, which push him irresistibly forward, like a mighty hurricane, towards higher and more complex forms of life, how did the consciousness of sin, as a failure or a fall, involving calamity, originate? If he be the mere outcome of internal and external forces – of organism and environment – he may at certain stages of his progress be defective, but he cannot be a sinner in the sense that he has "missed the mark" of moral excellence set before him. "It may require thousands of years to elevate him to a more complete existence; but he has not fallen from

any ideal he might have reached. He is only, at any point, what the sum total of natural factors which enter into his being have made him. The two conceptions of sin and of development, in this naturalistic sense, cannot co-exist!"[18] We must, therefore, either accept the testimony of consciousness that man is a sinner, and reject the theory of evolution, which does not recognise that fact; or accept the theory of evolution, and reject the testimony of consciousness as false.

But sin is more explicitly represented in the Vedas as a voluntary transgression of divine laws. "However we break thy laws from day to day, men as we are, O god Varuṇa, do not deliver us unto death; nor to the blow of the furious; nor to the wrath of the spiteful."[19] "Whenever we, men, O Varuṇa, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break the law through thoughtlessness, punish us not, O God, for that offence."[20] "May we be sinless before Varuṇa, who is gracious even to him who has committed sin, and may we follow the laws of Aditi."[21]

Sin was felt to be a great calamity, which is evident from the figures of speech used to represent it. It is a "*bond*" or a "*rope*" from which the sinner prays to be released. "Deliver us from sin as from a rope; let us obtain thy path of righteousness." "May the thread not be torn while I am weaving my prayers; may the form of my pious works not decay before its season." "Varuṇa, take all fear away from me; be kind to me, O just king ! Take away my sin like a rope from a calf; far from thee I am not the master even of a twinkling of the eye."[22] "Far from me be bonds; far from me be sin."[23] "O Ādityas, deliver us from the mouth of the wolves, like a bound thief, O Aditi."[24] "Whatever, O youthful god, we have committed against thee, men as we are, whatever sin through thoughtlessness, make us guiltless before Aditi,

loosen the sins on all sides, O Agni."[25] "O Varuṇa, lift the highest rope, draw off the lowest, remove the middle; then, O Āditya, let us be in thy service free of guilt before Aditi."[26] "O King Varuṇa, keep afar from us *Nirṛti,* and liberate us from whatever sin we have committed."[27]

Sin is a *heavy burden,* which the gods only can take away;[28] and a thick *darkness,* which "forgiveness" alone can dispel.[29] It is also a *sea* or a *flood,* across which we can only go in a divine boat. "We invoke the well-protecting earth, the unrivalled sky, the well-shielding Aditi, the good guide. Let us enter for safety into the divine boat, with good oars, faultless and leakless."[30] "Carry us, O Vasus, by your blessed protection, as it were, in your ship across all dangers."[31] "Let not unknown wretches, evil-disposed and unhallowed, tread us down. Through thy help, O hero, let us step over the rushing eternal waters."[32] "May Agni convey us as in a boat over a river, across all wickedness."[33] "Do thou, Rudra, waft us in safety over the ocean of sin, repel all the assaults of the ungodly."[34]

Man, having a natural tendency to sin, is a prey to temptations. "It was not our own doing, O Varuṇa; it was necessity (or temptation), an intoxicating draught, poison, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young; even sleep brings unrighteousness."[35] "Let not one sin after another, difficult to be conquered, overcome us; may it depart altogether with lust."[36] "May that blazing weapon of yours, Maruts, be far from us, although through human infirmities we offer you offence."[37] "Whatever (offence) we have committed by want of thought against the divine race, by feebleness of understanding, by violence, after the manner of men, and either against gods or men, do thou, O Sāvitri, make us sinless."[38]

This tendency is not only transmitted by the law that like produces like, but the sins of the fathers are in a mysterious

way imputed to their offspring. "Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we have committed with our own bodies."[39] "Let us not suffer, Mitra and Varuṇa, for offences committed by another; let us not, Vasus, do any act by which you may be offended."[40] "May Agni free me from the sin which my mother or father committed when I was in the womb."[41] "If thou liest there in consequence of any sin committed by thy mother, or thy father, with my voice I declare thy release and deliverance from them all."[42]

The effect of sin is to separate man from God, "Do I say this to my own self? How can I get unto Varuṇa? Will he accept my offering without displeasure? When shall I with a quiet mind see him propitiated? I ask, O Varuṇa, wishing to know this my sin—I go to ask the wise. The sages tell me the same,—Varuṇa is he who is angry with me. Was it an old sin, O Varuṇa, that thou wishest to destroy thy friend who always praises thee? Tell me, thou unconquerable lord, and I will quickly turn to thee with praise, freed from sin."[43] Again, Vasiṣṭa exclaims, "Where are those friendships of us two? We seek the harmony which we enjoyed of old. I have gone, O self-sustaining Varuṇa, to thy vast and spacious house with a thousand gates. He who was thy friend, intimate, thine own, and beloved, has committed offences against thee. Let us not who are guilty reap the fruits of our sin. Do thou, O wise god, grant protection to him who praises thee."[44]

As it is difficult for us, with our Christian conscience, to understand the precise meaning which the ancient Āryans attached to the word "sin," let us inquire, (1) What acts were not, and (2) What acts were, considered sinful by them. This alone will preserve us from the error of either over-estimating, or under-valuing their moral sense.

1. **What acts were not considered sinful by the Vedic Āryans**.

Aristotle says, "As men regard the forms, so also they consider the lives, of the gods to be similar to their own". Whatever acts, therefore, a nation attributes with approbation to its gods, we may reasonably conclude, are highly esteemed by itself. Throughout the Vedic hymns, the inebriety produced by quaffing the Soma-juice is celebrated with unfeigned satisfaction. All the gods are constantly invited to drink of the "immortal stimulant" *(amartyaṁ madaṁ),* which invigorates them, and increases their strength beyond all praise. "Indra has drunk; Agni has drunk. All the gods have become exhilarated."[45] "Indra drinks like a thirsty stag, or a bull roaming in waterless waste."[46] And all the effects produced on man by "strong drink" are ascribed to him. It is stated in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa that, "The gods get drunk, as it were, at the mid-day libation, and are consequently at the third libation in a state of complete drunkenness".[47] The *Śautramaṇī* was a ceremony appointed to expiate the evil effects of too free indulgence in the Soma-juice.

Wine *(Surā)* was also in use; for we read, "I place the poison in the sun, like a wine skin or leathern bottle, in the house of a vendor of wine."[48] Wine-bibbers are mentioned in R.V., viii., 21, 14. "The Aśvins gave a hundred jars of wine to Kakṣivan."[49] "The Soma draughts are said to contend in the interior of Indra like men maddened with wine'."[50] It is obvious, therefore, that drunkenness was not considered a sin in the Vedic age. Over-indulgence, however, in "strong drink," on the hot plains of India gradually bore its evil consequences; and, among the thoughtful, a revulsion of feeling was the result. Hence, in Manu's time, spirit-drinking was strictly prohibited, as being a most heinous crime, equal to that of killing a Brahman.[51] All honour to those ancient sages who resolutely set their faces against a habit, which, if continued, would probably have destroyed the Hindu Āryans long ago.

Though monogamy was doubtless the prevailing custom in the Vedic age,[52] polygamy is often spoken of without any disapprobation. We have seen before that the Ṛṣi Kakṣivan married the ten daughters of Rājā Swayana. And we are told that when the sage Cyavana had grown old, and had been forsaken, that the Aśvins divested him of his decrepit body, prolonged his life, restored him to youth, and made him "the husband of maidens".[53] Soma is said to have made the dawns bright at their birth,[54] and to have formed them the wives of a glorious husband.[55] Indra had two wives, Indrāṇī and Prāsaha. The sage Yājñavalkya had two wives, Maitreyī and Kātyāyani. One Ṛṣi exclaims, "The magnificent lord, the protector of the virtuous . . . has given me fifty wives".[56] The following are a specimen of man passages which allude with approbation to the possession of more than one wife, "Powerful Indra, their minds adhere to thee, as affectionate wives to a loving husband".[57] "Indra took to him all the cities as one common husband his wives."[58] "Thou dwellest with thy glories like a Rājā with his wives."[59] Even polyandry is hinted at in the fact that the two Aśvins had one wife in common,[60] and Rodasi was the common wife of the Maruts.[61]

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, ix., 1, 4, 6, distinctly avows the principle of polygamy, and explains its origin. "He sacrifices to the man first, then to the women. He exalts the man in consequence of his vigour. He sacrifices to the man as to one, and to the women as to many.[62] Hence also one man has many wives."[63]

The re-marriage of windows was not considered a crime in the Vedic age, as it is now; and the cruel custom of child-marriage; and the horrid rite of Suttee, or widow-burning, were then unknown.[64] We read in A.V., x., 5, 27, 8, "When a woman has had one husband before, and gets another, if

they present the *aja pañcandāna* offering, they shall not be separated. A second husband dwells in the same world with his re-wedded wife, if he offers the *aja pañcandāna.*" And in the A.V., v., 8, 9, it is stated that, "when a woman has had two former husbands, not Brahmans, if a priest take her hand *(i.e.,* marry her), it is he alone who is her husband. It is a Brahman only that is a husband, and not a Rājanya or a Vaiśya."

It appears, from the following verse, addressed to the Aśvins, that it was not an uncommon thing for a widow, to marry her deceased husband's brother, "Where are you by night, Aśvins, and where by day? Where do you alight? Where have you dwelt? Who draws you to his house, as a widow does her brother-in-law to the couch, or as a woman does a man?"[65] The same custom was in vogue in the time of Manu, for it is enacted in his code that, "The damsel, indeed, whose husband shall die after troth verbally plighted, but before consummation, his brother shall take in marriage according to this rule".[66]

The Vedic Āryans considered it neither a sin nor a disgrace for adult females to remain at home unmarried, or for those growing old to marry. We read, "As a virtuous maiden growing old in the same dwelling with her parents (claims from them her support), so came I to thee for wealth".[67] And the Aśvins are highly praised for having cured Goṣā, the daughter of Kakṣivan, and given her a husband when advanced in years.[68] There are indications even that women exercised the liberty of choosing their own husbands in those days.[69]

The plundering and destruction of the non-Āryan races was a theme of great rejoicing. "Indra and Soma, burn, destroy the Rākṣasas; annihilate the fools; slay and cast them into darkness, so that none of them may ever thence return."[70]

Indra consumed the Rākṣasas with his bolt as fire a dry forest;[71] yea, "he slew with his bolt a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred millions of the Dasyus".[72] "Destroy every one that reviles us; slay every one that does us injury; may all aliens perish," is the constantly recurring prayer.[73]

We find no trace here of the ancient brotherhood of man that is so much boasted of by certain Hindus of the present day !

2. What acts were considered sinful by the Vedic Āryans?

Gambling is represented as most ruinous in its effects upon persons and families. "The gambler finds no comfort in his need; his dice give transient gifts, and ruin the winner; it vexes him to see his own wife, and then to observe the wives and happy homes of others." "His wife rejects him, and his mother-in-law detests him." His father, mother, and brothers, ashamed of him, cry out, "We know nothing of him, take him away". "In debt, and seeking after money, the gambler approaches with trepidation the houses of other people at night." No wonder then that the advice of the Ṛṣi ever play with dice; practise husbandry; rejoice in thy property, esteeming it sufficient ".[74]

The gods are haters of falsehood, and punishers of all untruth. Hence the prayer, "Take away whatever sin has been found in me, whether I have done wrong, or have pronounced imprecations, or have spoken untruth". "May the untruth, which the wise and sinless Varuṇa observes in us, through thy favour, Indra, disappear;" for "those who practise untruths attain not the inconceivable deity." [75]

Stealing was a crime, and dishonesty in business was deprecated. Pūṣan, as the god of travellers, is invoked to "drive away from our path the waylayer, the thief, the robber"; and Indra is entreated "not to take advantage of us like a dealer".[76]

Illiberality towards one's own kith and kin was severely condemned, while liberality was highly praised. "He who keeps his food to himself has sin to himself also." "The wise man makes the giving of gifts his breastplate." "The car of bounty rolls on easy wheels." "The house of the liberal man is like a pool where lotuses grow." "The property of the liberal man never decays, while the illiberal finds no comforter." "The givers of gifts abide aloft in the sky; the bestowers of horses live with the sun; the givers of gold attain immortality; the bestowers of raiment prolong their lives."[77]

Sorcery and witchcraft, seduction and adultery, were denounced.[78]

Non-performance of religious rites; the reviling of the soul-inspiring Soma-juice; disobedience to parents; and want of peace and concord in the family, were considered wrong. The following benediction from the Atharva-Veda has lost none of its force and beauty for domestic happiness by the lapse of three thousand years, "I impart to you concord with unity of hearts and freedom from hatred; delight one in the other as a cow in the birth of a calf. May the son be obedient to his father, and of one mind with his mother. May the wife, at peace with her husband, speak to him honied words. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister sister; concordant and united in will, speak to one another with kind words."[79]

It is now evident that the Vedic Āryans regarded sin, not only as a Fall, but also as the voluntary transgression of divine laws entailing punishment. They recognised the reality of both a divine and a human will The gods, of their own free will, gave the laws, and men, of their own free will, broke them. Their consciousness of sin, therefore, contains (1) a knowledge of divine laws, and (2) the voluntary transgression of them.

But whence this knowledge of divine laws? What is the origin of the idea of Law as the moral standard of right and wrong? Max Müller, in his *Hibbert Lectures,* says, that the idea of physical law, denoting the uniformity of natural phenomena, originated in the perception of the "recurring return of day and night, the weekly changes of the waning and increasing moon, the succession of the seasons, and the rhythmic dances of the stars"; which uniformity found expression in the word *ṛta,* right path or law, and that from this *ṛta,* the moral law, the right path for man to walk in, was deduced or inferred. There seems to be nothing in the Vedas to support this view. The word *ṛta,* though used chiefly to denote outward cosmical order, is also used to denote inward moral order; and hence the question whether the one order is a deduction or an inference from the other must be settled on grounds other than philological.

Now, granting that sensuous impressions of the uniformity of natural phenomena did produce the idea of physical law, in the sense of the right path in which the heavenly bodies should move, how could that originate the idea of a right path in a moral sense, in which man should go? If it be affirmed that the concept of outward cosmical order did not produce inward moral order as such, but the perception of it; then, we ask, how can inward moral order exist apart from the perception of it? Is not perception the condition and evidence of its existence? Again, if it be affirmed that the concept of outward cosmical order awakened the latent sense of inward moral order, then it is evident that the sense, or idea, was there already; and hence that it was not derived from the *ṛta,* the concept of outward cosmical order, which, *ex hypothesi,* was deduced from sensuous impressions. Before man could apply the word *ṛta* to the uniformity of natural phenomena, he must have known the *ṛita,* the right path, and

its opposite. He must have been conscious of a law within, or a standard by which he could judge what is right and what is wrong. The very terms *right* and *wrong* imply the, possession of such a standard. The moral law is ingrained in the nature of man, written, as the Apostle Paul says, on the heart;[80] and hence fragments of it are found among all nations; but among none more fully than among the Hindus of the Vedic age. The correspondence between the Vedic and the Biblical conception of sin is remarkable. The former contains the essential elements of the latter. But, in proportion as we recede from that age, we find the conception of sin becoming attenuated, until, on the one hand, it is deprived of its moral character, and, on the other, of its reality. The philosophical treatises recognise evil, but no sin; and in this respect there is nothing to choose between them and the utterances of the most degraded tribes.[81]

3. Personal Immortality

The immortality of man is not a doctrine of the schools, but a belief of humanity; not based on the metaphysic, or proved by the logic, of any system, but the utterance of a primary instinct common to the race, which has made itself heard more or less distinctly wherever man is found. It is the glory of Christianity that it has satisfied that instinct by authoritatively ratifying the belief in immortality and placing it beyond a doubt.

The intimations of a belief in life after death are not so numerous and distinct in the first eight books of the Ṛg-Veda as in the last two. They are, however, sufficiently numerous and distinct to indicate that such a belief was a prominent feature in the religious creed of the ancient Āryans. All the gods are believed to be immortal, and capable of conferring immortality upon their worshippers. Agni is said to render

mortals immortal.[82] The same power is ascribed to Soma.[83] The Maruts are besought to make their worshippers immortal;[84] and Mitra and Varuṇa are asked to grant rain, wealth, and immortality.[85]

The following hymn, addressed to Soma, in the ninth book of the Ṛg-Veda, contains a vivid description of life after death, expressed in beautiful language with childlike confidence :

"Where is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world, place me, O Soma!"

"Where King Vaivaśvata reigns, where the secret, place of heaven is, where the mighty waters are, there make me immortal !"

"Where life is free in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal !"

"Where there is happiness and delight, where joy and pleasure reside, where the desires of our desire are attained, there make me immortal!"[86]

The Vedic Āryans regarded immortality as a species of apotheosis or deification. Those who were made immortal became deities themselves, and were invoked for the same blessings as the elder deities bestowed. The Ṛbhus, the three sons of Sudhanvan, the dexterous humble-minded artisans of the gods, constructed "the glorious three-wheeled car of the Aśvins"; "restored their aged and infirm parents to youth"; and "divided into four the new sacrificial ladle which the divine Tvāṣṭṛ had made," for which exhibition of skill they obtained divinity, and "proceeded on the road of immortality to the assemblage of the gods"; whence they are invoked : "Ye who through your skill have become gods, and like falcons

are seated in the sky, do ye, children of strength, give us riches; ye, O sons of Sudhanvan, have become immortal".[87]

The Vedic doctrine of a future life is closely connected with, and seems to have grown up around, the memory of the Pitṛis, or ancestral fathers of families. Though they had departed from this world, they had not ceased to live. They all occupy different stages of blessedness in the celestial spheres.[88] They have all "obtained riches among the gods";[89] and as "companions" of the gods, they are all invoked, like the Roman Catholic Saints, to be propitious to, and to intercede for, their descendants here on earth.[90] "Invoked to these favourite oblations placed on the grass, may the Fathers, the offerers of Soma, come; may they hear us; may they intercede for us, and preserve us. Do us no injury, O Fathers, on account of any offence which we, after the manner of men, may commit against you. Bestow wealth on the mortal who worships you; Fathers, bestow this wealth upon your sons, and now grant them sustenance."[91] Thus the ancient Āryan faith in the continued life of the Fathers, who "had departed first," was so strong as to place the doctrine of immortality beyond a doubt. Death had not annihilated them, and hence need not annihilate their sons; and therefore they pray to be "added to the people of eternity," who dwell in Varuṇa's world of perfect and undying light. This faith has never lost its hold on the Hindu mind. It manifests itself now in the Śrāddha ceremony, or offering to his Father's spirit, which is the most solemn duty devolving on every Hindu son.

The belief in a future life in this form appears in all branches of the Āryan race. Cicero says, "So great is the sanctity of the tomb, our ancestors have desired that those who departed this life should be held as 'deities'". And Plato says, "Let men fear, in the first place, the gods above; next, the souls of the dead, to whom in the course of nature

it belongs, to have a care of their offspring". Johnson, in his *Oriental Religions,* says, "The Latin *Dii Manes* and the Greek *Theoi Chthonioi* correspond perfectly to the Vedic Pitṛs, blessed divinities, who watch over their descendants, and expect their tributes of holy rites".

In the later books of the Ṛg-Veda, the belief in life after death stands impersonated in Yama. Yama and his twin sister Yamī, are, according to Professors Roth and Whitney, the first human pair, the originators of the race. "As the Hebrew conception closely connected the parents of mankind by making the woman formed from a portion of the body of the man, so by the Indian tradition they are placed in the relationship of twins." In the tenth book of the Ṛg-Veda there is a curious dialogue between Yamī and her brother Yama, where she implores him to make her his wife, on the ground (1) that "the Creator made us for man and wife, while yet in the womb"; and (2) that the "immortals" desire that Yama, "the one sole mortal," should leave a descendant behind. He, however, declines, on the plea that it is a sin for a brother to marry his sister. Max Müller, in his *Science of Language,* denies that Yama and Yamī are the Indian Adam and Eve; and resolves the whole legend into one of the myths of the Dawn, the day, and Yamī, the night. This explanation, however, seems too narrow and exclusive, as it leaves no room for the exercise of thought and imagination upon the origin, condition, and destiny of the human race. Surely the tragic elements of human life, birth and death must have touched the ancient Āryans as profoundly as the rising and setting of the sun.

The legend of Yama and Yamī was the common inheritance of the Hindu and Iranian Āryans before their separation; and hence we may reasonably infer that it was one of the original traditions of the primeval home. The Hindu

Yama, the son of Vivasvat, is the Iranian Yima, the son of Vivaṅghat. The Hindu Yama is "the first man that died, the first that departed to the celestial world, and spied out the road for many". Consequently he is "the assembler of men, the king of the departed, who first found for us the way to a home beyond the grave, which shall not be taken from us".[92]

The Iranian Yima is the king and founder of a golden age, the most glorious of men, during whose reign neither sickness, nor age, nor death; neither cold nor heat; neither hatred nor strife existed. But after continuing for some time to diffuse happiness and immortality, he was disturbed by the powers of darkness, and so was compelled to withdraw, together with his attendants, to a more contracted sphere.[93] The difference between these two legends is this : the Hindu Yama is the king of the blessed *after* their departure to the celestial world; whereas the Iranian Yima is the king of the blessed in *this* world, who have continued to live with him from the golden age. This legend, in its original form, probably contained these two versions. For the tradition of the first "man that died," the "one sole mortal," must necessarily include the tradition of the first man that lived. The Iranians emphasised the latter and the Hindus the former. This is easily explained. The Iranians, tormented with the moral antagonisms of good and evil, which they felt so keenly, clung to the tradition of a golden past when these did not exist. But the Hindus, less moral, more imaginative, entangled in the coils of nature worship, sighing for relief, clung to the tradition of the first man that died, who had opened a way for them to the kingdom of light, where all their sorrows shall cease.

In Yama, the Vedic doctrine of a future state finds its highest expression. The Fathers are not lost sight of; but he being the Father of the Fathers, the first Manu, or man, is

exalted above them, and regarded as their supreme ruler. He dwells in celestial light in the innermost centre of heaven.[94] He grants to the departed both "an abode distinguished by days, and waters and lights," and "a long life among the gods".[95] He is associated with the divine Varuṇa, worshipped as a god, and "feasts according to his desire on the oblations"[96] "He shares his gratifications with the eager Vasiṣṭhas, our ancient ancestors, who presented the Soma libation."[97]

Yama and the Fathers dwell together in eternal bliss; and the most profound yearning of their children was to join them when this life had become extinct. Hence when the body was being consumed on the funeral pyre, the following verses were addressed to the soul, "Depart thou, depart by the ancient paths to the place whither our early fathers have departed. There shalt thou see the two kings Yama, and the god Varuṇa, exulting in independent power. Meet the Fathers, meet with Yama, meet with the recompense of the sacrifices which thou hast offered (or laid up) in the highest heaven. Throwing off all imperfection, go to thy home. Become united to a body, and clothed in a shining form."[98] Sometimes it is added, "Let him depart to the mighty in battle; to the heroes who have laid down their lives for others; to those who have bestowed thousands of largesses".[99]

The Vedic Āryans did not believe in disembodied spirits, or shades of the departed in Hades, like the Homeric Greeks[100] but in a complete body glorified and purified by fire. The soul, "throwing off all imperfections," becomes united to a spiritual body, "clothed in a shining form". Hence when the process of cremation is begun, Agni, the god of fire, is implored not to "burn up, or consume the departed, not to tear asunder his skin or his limbs, but after the flames have done their work of maturing, or purifying him, to convey him to the fathers". For "when he shall reach that state of

vitality, he shall fulfil the pleasure of the gods". The eye of the deceased is commanded to go to the sun, his breath to the wind, and his different members to the sky, the earth, the waters, or the plants, according to their several affinities. "As for his unborn part, do thou (Agni) kindle it with thy heat; let thy flame and thy lustre kindle it, with those forms of thine, which are auspicious, convey it to the world of the righteous."[101] The spirit thus invested with a lustre like that of the gods, soars to realms of eternal life, where it receives its ancient body in a complete and glorified form without a limb missing.[102] "The belief in the immortality of the soul," says Burnouf, "not naked and inactive, but living and clothed with a glorious body, was never interrupted for a moment; it is now in India what it was in those ancient times, and even rests on a similar metaphysical basis."[103]

The Vedic conception of the pleasures of heaven is sensual rather than spiritual, Mahomedan rather than Christian! The gods themselves are not regarded as possessing purely spiritual natures, but as subject to the influence of various sensual appetites. They delight continually in quaffing the Soma, and in the exhilaration it produces; Yama is represented as carousing with the gods under a tree;[104] the Ādityas as eating honey;[105] and the Fathers as indulging in festivity or revelry with Yama.[106] Indra is said to have a handsome wife, and to enjoy pleasure in his house.[107] The Gandharvas assume the form of handsome men, in order to seduce earthly females, though they have their own celestial wives, the Asparases.[108] If, then, the pleasures of the gods are regarded as carnal and sensual, it is too much to expect the ancient Ṛṣis to imagine the pleasures of departed men to be anything different. It is difficult to understand, therefore, how Professor Roth could have written, "What shall be the employment of the blest, in what sphere shall their activity expend itself? to this question

ancient Hindu wisdom sought no answer". It is distinctly stated in A.V., iv., 34, that "in the celestial region" the "faithful are promised ponds filled with clarified butter, honey, wine, milk, and curds, as well as abundance of sexual enjoyment".

Vedic futurity had its heaven, but the intimations that it had its hell are less numerous and distinct. There are passages, however, which show that the ancient Āryans believed in a place of punishment for the wicked. Otherwise we can scarcely explain such passages as those in which Yama is regarded as an object of terror. He is said to have two insatiable dogs, with four eyes and wide nostrils, which guard the road to his abode, and which the dead are advised to hurry past with all possible speed.[109] These dogs wander among men as his messengers, doubtless to summon them to the presence of their master, who in R.V., x., 165, 4, is identified with *mrityu,* death, and described as sending a bird, the herald of doom. Deliverance also is sought from the bonds of Yama, as well as from those of Varuṇa.[110]

It may be objected that these passages which represent Yama as an object of terror, do not prove a future hell, but only the instinctive fear of man to die. But we have more positive evidence. Mention is made of a pit *(kartā).* into which the hated and irreligious are hurled;[111] and into which Indra casts those who offer no sacrifices.[112] "This deep abyss has been produced for those who, being sinners, false, untrue, go about like women without brothers, like wicked females hostile to their husbands.[113] One poet prays that the Ādityas may preserve him from the destroying wolf, and from falling into the pit.[114] And Indra is implored to annihilate the might of malignant hosts, and hurl them into the vast and vile pit."[115]

The doctrine of a future state, of rewards and punishments is more distinctly, taught in the Mantra portion of the Vedas.

Professor Weber says, "In the Brāhmaṇas, immortality, or at least longevity, is promised to those who rightly understand and practise the rites of sacrifice; while those who are deficient in this respect, depart before their natural time of life to the next world, where they are weighed in a balance, and receive good or evil, according to their deeds. The more sacrifices any one has offered, the more ethereal is the body he obtains; or, as the Brāhmaṇas express it, the more rarely does he need to eat. In other passages again, it is promised as the highest reward that the pious man shall be born in the next world with his entire body *(sarvatanūr eva sāṅgaḥ)*. Here the high estimation of individual existence culminates, and a purely personal immortality is involved."[116]

There is notrace of the doctrine of metempsychosis in the hymns of the Ṛg-Veda. The old Ṛṣis evince no sympathy whatever with the desire to get rid of action and personal existence, which became so remarkable a feature of later Hindu Theology and Philosophy. On the contrary, they manifest a cheerful enjoyment of life, and the most earnest desire for its prolongation in this world, and its continuation in the next. According to Weber,[117] the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is first found in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, and the Bṛhad Āraṇka of the white Yajus; but in such a complete form as to make it certain that it existed long before the date of those treatises. Barth in his *Religions of India,* says, "The doctrine which is henceforth the fundamental hypothesis common to all the religions and sects of India, is found formulated in the Upaniṣads for the first time. In the most ancient portions of the Brāhmaṇas, it appears of small account, and with less range of application. The faith we find there seems simply to be, that the man who has led an immoral life may be condemned to return to this world to undergo here

an existence of misery. Re-birth is only a form of punishment; it is the opposite of the celestial life, and tantamount to the infernal. It is not yet what it is here, and what it will continue to be eventually, the state of personal being, a state which may be realised in endlessly diverse forms of being, from that of the insect to that of the god, but all of equal instability, and subject to relapse. It is impossible to fix the period at which this old belief found in the new metaphysical ideas the medium favourable to its expansion. But it is certain that from the end of the sixth century, before our era, when Śākyamuni was meditating his work of salvation, the doctrine, such as it appears in the Upaniṣads, was almost complete, and appears deeply rooted in the popular conscience. Without this *point d'appui* the spread of Buddhism would hardly be intelligible."

The degrading effect of this doctrine on the Hindu mind is graphically described by Dr. Wilson in his *India Three Thousand Years Ago,* "The bringing of the brutes up to the level of man has brought down man to the level of the brutes. It has driven man entirely from the apprehension of his right position in the scale of creation. It has confused, compounded and confounded him, to his great dishonour, with beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes; with the lowest invertebrated animals, and even with vegetable organism of every species and variety. I am now an intelligent man, but soon I may be a chattering monkey; I am now a tender-hearted woman but ere long I may be a ravening wolf; I am now a studious boy, but next year I may be a stupid buffalo; I am now a playful girl, but after my next birth I may be a skipping goat. That querulous crow may be my own deceased father, that hungry cat my own departed mother, that raging bear my quondam brother, and that crawling serpent my late sister." This is the

legitimate language of metempsychosis. What a degradation of the sublime doctrine of the ancient Ṛṣis ! And what a complete refutation of the dictum of certain philosophers, that the doctrine of a future state has been gradually evolved from dreams ! The higher up we trace the Hindu Āryan doctrine of a future life, the more perfect and sublime we find it; the lower down we follow it, the more degraded and irrational it appears.

4. The Origin and Growth of Caste

The word "caste" is derived from the Portuguese word "casta," race; and is used by Europeans to represent the Sanskrit words *varṇa,* colour, and *jāti,* tribe or class. And the three words *caste, varṇa, jāti,* are used to denote the various classes into which the Hindu community is divided by hard and fast lines, which absolutely bar every entrance from a lower to a higher social grade. It is not merely a social institution, denning the various grades of society like rank among other nations, but a religious institution, a radical difference between man and man, created by the Deity, the preservation of which is the most sacred duty devolving upon every Hindu.

The rules of caste are almost innumerable : but they are all connected more or less with (1) food and its preparation, (2) inter-marriage, and (3) professional pursuits. These features, however, were not developed in the earliest part of the Vedic age.[118] "There is no authority whatever in the hvmns of the Veda for the complicated system of caste; no authority for the offensive privileges claimed by the Brahmans; no authority for the degraded position of the Śūdras. There is no law to prohibit the different classes of the people from living together, from eating and drinking together; no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes;

no law to brand the offspring of such marriages with an indelible stigma."[119] Ṛṣis and Priests, as we have seen before,[120] were from the Kṣhatriya, as well as from the Brahman, caste; such as Viśvāmitra, the author of the Gāyatrī, and Jamadagni, the reputed father of Paraśurāma, the great champion of the Brahmans. And Brahman Ṛṣis married the daughters of Kṣhatriyas, or kings. It is evident, therefore, that Priests and Ṛṣis did not constitute a caste in those days, in the modern sense of the term. Indeed, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa distinctly states that all men after the deluge sprang from Manu and Iḍā; and the Ṛg-Veda, in its account of the first created pair, Yama and Yamī, implies the common origin of all nations in the beginning. It is true that in the dialogue between Yama and Yamī, he declines to take his sister to wife; but this is obviously an adaptation of the original story to suit the susceptibilities of a later age. For had he not taken her for his wife, whence came his descendants?[121]

"The doctrine of ceremonial defilement by touch, or by eating and drinking—by which the existence of caste is particularly marked in the present social and religious life of the Hindus-is not recognised in the Vedas in a single instance."[122] There was then neither horror nor defilement attached to eating beef; for "when the pious have recourse to Indra for food, they find it in the haunts of the *Goura* and *Gavaya,* two well-known Indian species of the wild ox".[123] "Bestow (Indra) upon him who glorifies thee food, the chiefest of which is cattle." "Release Vasiṣṭha, O King, like a thief who has feasted on stolen oxen."[124] Indra is represented as "cutting in pieces the limbs of Vṛitra as of a cow";[125] and as eating the flesh of bulls and buffaloes when drinking large draughts of the Soma.[126] Agni, to aid his friend Indra, fortified himself by eating three hundred buffaloes;[127] and Ṛṣi

Vāmadeva confesses, that when in extreme destitution, he cooked and eat the entrails of a dog,[128] which, according even to Manu, did not make him impure under the circumstances.[129]

But though modern caste was unknown in the Vedic age, the four social ranks, priests, warriors, husbandmen and serfs, were recognised before the collection of the Ṛg-Veda was completed. In the 90th hymn of the 10th book of the Ṛg-Veda, called the Puruṣa Sūkta, the four ranks are mentioned by their technical names. "When they formed (or offered up) Puruṣa *(primeval Male),* into how many parts did they divide him? What was his mouth? What were his arms? What were called his thighs and feet? The Brahman was his mouth; the Rājanya (king) was made his arms; the Vaiśya became his thighs; the Śūdra was born from his feet." This highly figurative hymn proves no more as to the origin of the four castes than it does as to the origin of the moon, sun, and wind, which it represents as having been produced respectively from the mind, the eye, and the breath of Puruṣ ha. It is interesting only as showing that the four social ranks were technically known in those days. Again, in an address to the Aśvins, the poet says, "Favour the prayer *(brahma),* favour the service, kill the Rākṣasas, drive away the evil . . . favour the power *(khatra)* and favour the manly strength . . . favour the cow *(dhenu,* the representative of property) and favour the people or house *(viṣa)*".[130]

The exalted position of the, priesthood, as a profession, was also acknowledged; and the Priest had already commenced to arrogate to himself that supreme power over all other classes of the community which ultimately culminated in his deification. "That king before whom marches the Priest,[131] he alone dwells well-established in his own house, to him the earth yields at all times, to him the people bow by themselves." "The king who gives wealth to the Priest, that

implores his protection, he will conquer unopposed the treasures, whether of his enemies or his friends; him the gods will protect."[132] He met, however, with determined resistance and ridicule at first, which is evident from the following imprecations, "Whosoever, O Maruts, weans himself above us, or scoffs at the prayer *(brahma)* which we have made, may hot plagues come upon him, may the sky burn up that hater of Brahmans *(brahmadviṣ)*".

"Did they not call thee, Soma, the Guardian of the Brahman? did they not say that thou didst shield us against curses? Why dost thou look on when we are scoffed at? Hurl against the hater of the Brahman the fiery spear.[133]"

According to Manu, Brahmā caused the Brahman, the Kṣhatriya, the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra, to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot; and some of these, by inter-marriage, and others by neglect of Brahmanical rites, produced the other castes. And this is the prevailing doctrine in India at the present day.[134] Apart, however, from the fact that Brahma, prayer, was not developed into a god when the four social distinctions of rank were first recognised in the Ṛg-Veda, many of Manu's degraded castes are known to be the pre-Āryan aboriginal inhabitants of India, such as the Draviḍas of the south; while others derive their names from countries and professions, such as Vaidehas from Videha; and Venas, musicians, from Vena, lyre. Besides, there is no evidence that Manu's caste system ever extended to the south of India. The Āryans did not conquer the south by force of arms, as they did the north, but by the more honourable force of superior knowledge and higher civilisation. They were unable, therefore, either to impose their language upon the aboriginal inhabitants, or to treat them as serfs. Hence they cunningly called the higher and middle classes of the Dravidians "*Śūdras* persuading them that in calling them by

that name, they were conferring a title of honour upon them. And consequently Śūdras in the south rank next to Brahmans, and the title is regarded by all classes as a title of honour. The Pariahs of the south, who were probably conquered by the present Śūdras, appear to correspond to the Śūdras of the north. It is evident, therefore, that Manu's account of the origin of caste is altogether imaginary.

The *true* origin of the four primitive Hindu ranks must be sought in the social, political and religious necessities of the Āryans on their arrival in "the land of the five rivers". That their first settlement was the Punjab, whence they gradually extended to the east and south-east, is evident from the geography of the hymns. The limits of which are, on the west, *Kubha,*[135] the Kophen of the Greeks, the river Cabul and its affluents, and the Gandharis,[136] a tribe of the valley; the Rasa, which corresponds with the Zend name of Jaxartes, appears to be mythical in the Veda.[137] On the east, the Sarayu, the modern Gogra, and the tribe of the Kikatas in Bihār.[138] The authors of the hymns were also acquainted with the sea, the Indian Ocean, south of the Indus.[139] In the time of Manu they occupied the whole regions called by him Āryāvarta, the abode of the Āryans, extending from the western to the eastern sea, and bounded on the north and south by the Himālaya and Vindhya mountains.[140]

The Āryans were then in a strange country, inhabited by a strange, uncouth people, who differed greatly from themselves in colour, language, religion, and customs. These, in consequence of the opposition which they offered to the advance of the conquerors, are described by them in the most odious terms, as *dasyus,* enemies; *dāsa,* slaves; *rākṣasas,* barbarians; *kravyad,* raw flesh eaters; *avṛa,* devoid of religious rites; *abrahma,* priestless; *anagnitra,* not keeping the sacred fire; *achitas,* mad; and *meuradevas,* worshippers

of mad gods. They are even accused of eating human flesh ! Thus we read, "The *yātudhānas* who gloat on the bloody flesh of men or horses, and steal the milk of the cow, O Agni, cut off their heads with thy fiery sword."[141] There is no reason, however, to believe that this description of the aborigines by their conquering enemies is correct; for we find that the great Brahman Ṛṣi, Vasiṣṭa, when in feud with the Rāja Ṛṣi, Viśvāmitra, is called not only an enemy, but a "*yātudhāna*" or demon. Besides, we learn that these people had fortified cities, fought with weapons, possessed much wealth, were governed by kings.[142]

As might be expected, they opposed the invaders of their country and the plunderers of their wealth with all the means at their disposal. But the greater physical strength and superior skill of the Āryans prevailed, and they had to submit to a foreign yoke. Here, then, was the first distinction of caste, a distinction both ethnical and political – the distinction between foreigners and natives, between the conquerors and the conquered. This distinction was heightened by the difference of colour existing between the two races; the former being "white" and the latter "black,"[143] – a difference still visible between the Āryans and the non-Āryans. And hence *varṇa,* colour, the term used by the Āryans to mark off the difference between themselves and the aboriginal inhabitants, came afterwards to be the general designation of all distinctions in Hindu society.

The aboriginal inhabitants, who submitted peaceably to Āryan rule, were denominated Śūdras, serfs – in contradistinction to the Āryans, "nobles. The word "Śūdra" is not of Sanskrit origin, and hence must have been imported into the Āryan speech from some of the non-Āryan languages. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa we find that Śūdras and *Abhiras* are invariably mentioned together, as if conterminous.[144] *Abhira,* according

to Ptolemy, is a district above Pattalene on the Indus. The Śūdras, therefore, were a people who lived in the same vicinity on the banks of the same river, and were probably the *Hudrokoi* mentioned by Megasthenes, who sent auxiliaries to the Persians before the time of Alexander the Great. These, it is natural to suppose, were the first people conquered by the Āryans after crossing the Indus; and as they gradually conquered other people, on their march from west to east, they extended this designation to them, as a sign both of conquest and of difference of blood. At first these Śūdras must have been of great assistance to the Āryans; and in recognition of this, they were not unwilling to admit, them to their sacrifices, as appears from the following passage from the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, respecting the call of the sacrificers, "If the sacrificer be a Brahman, it is said *ehi,* come; if he is a Vaiśya, then it is *agahi,* come hither; when a Rājabandhu, it is *adrava,* run hither; with a Śūdra, it is *adrava,* run hither". But when the Āryans had extended their conquests and consolidated their power, the old antipathy between the "white complexion" and the "dark skin" revived, and the Śūdras were relegated to that humiliating position in which we find them in Manu's time, when it was enacted, "Let him (a Brahman) not give advice to a Śūdra, nor what remains from his table; nor clarified butter of which a part has been offered; nor let him give spiritual counsel to such a man; nor inform him of the legal expiation for his sin. Surely he who declares the law to a servile man, and he who instructs him in the mode of expiating sin, sinks with that very man into the hell named *Asamvṛta.*" [145]

A large number of the aboriginal inhabitants refused to submit to the Āryans and fled, like the Welsh before the Saxons, to the mountains and other inaccessible places, which is evident from the non-Āryan character of the languages

spoken by their descendants at the present day. And probably some dissatisfied deserters frorn the great Āryan host joined them, and, uniting their forces with those of the aboriginal inhabitants, fought against their brethren. Hence Indra is often invoked to "destroy both these our foes, our Dāsa and our Ārya enemies."[146] According to the Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa, many of these renegades were subsequently readmitted to the Brahman community by the performance of sacrifices called *vratyaṣṭomas*.

It was necessary, therefore, to set apart a large number of the Āryan community to protect the invaders from the constant incursions of the Natives, as well as to extend and consolidate their dominion. These were the Kṣhatriyas, the powerful ones; and their chiefs became first the heads of petty states, and afterwards, princes of mighty kingdoms. Their children from generation to generation were brought up in the same profession, and so, in the course of time, the profession of arms became hereditary, and the warriors a caste. And as their profession was both honourable and lucrative, inasmuch as the safety of their brethren depended on their prowess, they were impelled by the most potent motives of self-interest to guard it with jealous vigilance against all intruders.

But the warriors could not exist without the husbandmen, who in every age and everywhere are the backbone of government. They till the ground and supply the necessaries of life; and though their calling is humbler than that of the soldier, it is equally important and necessary. They were *Vaiśyas,* or householders, and one of the designations of the king was *Viśpati*[147] the lord of the *Viś*. The necessities of social life compelled the Vaiśyas to divide themselves into various professions and handicrafts. Carpenters and Smiths were necessary to make agricultural implements; masons to build houses; weavers to weave cloth; jewellers to make

ornaments; merchants to buy and sell; and physicians to attend the sick. Thus gradually rose all the divisions of the professional and artisan classes; and as each class not only became a sort of guild to guard its own interests against every other class, but brought up its children in the same calling, such calling by degrees became exclusive, and its followers a caste.

Contemporaneously with these classes, and at first imperceptibly, there grew up another class, the Brahmanical or Priestly, destined to assume the most awful prerogatives, and to exercise the most tyrannical powers within the reach of man. At the dawn of history, access to the gods by prayer and sacrifice was the undoubted privilege of every Āryan without distinction. The father was probably the first *Purhohita,* or foreman, who conducted the worship of the family, and after this model *Agni* was constituted the *Purhohita* of the gods. The poet, however, occupied a position so exalted from the earliest times, as to cause even kings to covet the high honour of being *Rājaṛiṣis,* or royal bards. No wonder, for he inspired the, nation with odes in honour of the gods; he prayed for victory in the day of battle, for rain in the time of drought, and for all blessings to the friends of Indra ! His prayer was apparently answered. A victory was won, or a great drought was removed by abundance of refreshing showers. Then came the war song and the hymn of praise, "Did not Indra preserve Sudās in the battle of the ten kings through your prayer, O Vasiṣṭhas?"[148] "This prayer of Viśvāmitra, of one who has praised heaven, and earth, and Indra, preserves the people of the Bharatas."[149] "The Ṛṣi Devāpi, son of Ṛṣṭiṣena, performing the sacrifice, and skilled in celebrating the gods, has let loose the showers of rain from the upper to the lower ocean. The waters were shut up by the gods in the upper ocean; when let loose by Devāpi, they were discharged on the plains."[150] The poet was naturally

elated, and soon began to believe that there must be some connection between his utterances and the blessings obtained. His children were brought up in the same profession and in the same belief. If not all poets themselves, they could treasure in their memories the songs of their sires—the songs, that had accomplished so much—and repeat them as circumstances required. Occasionally original poets arose, then new songs were added to the literature of the nation; and as this process continued from age to age, it resulted in the production of a literature so enormous as, in the absence of writing, to make it absolutely necessary for a class of men to devote themselves entirely to its preservation and transmission. Add to this, that, in the course of time, the language of the Veda ceased to be understood by the multitude. The old Sanskrit of the Āryans, having decayed and given birth to new dialects, lay buried in the hymns. From that epoch Sanskrit became a sacred language, and the Veda a sacred text, which could only be taught, as well as preserved, by a class of men set apart for the purpose. Thus originated the Ṛṣis or Seers, Hebrew *roim,* class of men half prophets and half priests, whose function it was to teach, inspire, and lead the people. It is not difficult to understand how such men were soon reverenced as the best and wisest, as those who lived nearest to, and on the most familiar terms with, the gods. A prayer, therefore, uttered in behalf of any one, or a sacrifice performed by one of these Ṛṣis, must necessarily be deemed more efficacious than if uttered or performed by the head of the family, or by the individual himself;[151] and so the Ṛṣi gradually developed into a Purhohita; and as power generally gravitates to the wisest, especially in the earliest stages of society, he was endowed with supreme power, both political and spiritual. Every king must have a Purhohita as his friend, counsellor, and minister. For "breath does not leave him

before time, he lives to an old age, he goes to his full time, and does not die again, who has a Brahman as guardian of his land, as Purhohita. He conquers power by power; obtains strength by strength; the people obey him, are peaceful and of one mind."[152] Hence we find that the Ṛṣis Vasiṣṭa and Viśvāmitra, who, together with their families, were Purhohitas to king Sudās, not only chanted hymns and offered sacrifices, but followed his army – Bismarck-like – and counselled him as chief minister. And the long contest which these two families carried on, in order to secure for themselves the hereditary dignity of Purhohita, shows how highly the office was valued, and the tendency to make it exclusive. This tendency, persisted in, ultimately prevailed, and the office became sacred and hereditary. And as the Vedic ritual developed, four classes of priests were ordained to officiate at the various sacrifices, of which the Brahman, the utterer of prayer *par excellence,* was only one; he was, however, the chief priest, Purhohita, or Episcopos of all the ceremonies. And when the power, which had been distributed among many chieftains, was consolidated in the hands of a few powerful kings, the priestly families took advantage of their position as counsellors to those kings, and forming themselves into a compact fraternity, usurped supreme power on earth. No wonder, therefore, that we read in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, "There are two kinds of gods: first the gods, then those who are Brahmans, and who have learnt the Veda and repeat it, they are human gods *(manuṣyaḥ devaḥ)*. And this sacrifice is twofold; oblations for the gods, gifts for the human gods, the Brahmans, who have learnt the Veda and repeat it. With oblations he appeases the gods, with gifts the human gods, the Brahmans, who have learnt the Veda and repeat it. Both gods, when they are pleased, place him in bliss."[153]

It is evident then (1) That there was no caste properly so called in the Mantra, or oldest period of the Veda; and (2) That the four social distinctions, which subsequently developed into caste, were nothing more in that early age than four social ranks, which originated in the necessities of social, political, and religious life.

Indeed, the doctrine that originally there was but one caste, is not altogether forgotten in the popular legends of the caste-ridden *post*-Vedic age. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, we read, "In the Kṛta, or golden age, there were no castes, orders, varieties of condition, or mixture of castes"; and in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, that "There was formerly only one Veda, the sacred monosyllable Om, the essence of all speech; only one god, Nārāyaṇa, one Agni (fire), and one caste". Bhṛgu, in the Mahābhārata, says, "There is no difference of castes; this world, having been at first created by Brahmā entirely Brahmanic, became afterwards separated into castes in consequence of works. Those Brahmans (lit. twice-born men) who were fond of sensual pleasures, fiery, irascible, prone to violence, who had forsaken their duty, and were red-limbed, fell into the condition of Kṣatriyas. Those Brahmans who derived their livelihood from kine, who were yellow, who subsisted by agriculture, and who neglected to practise their duties, entered into the state of Vaiśyas. Those Brahmans who were addicted to mischief, falsehood, who were covetous, who lived by all kinds of work, who were black and had fallen from purity, sank into the condition of Śūdras. Being separated from each other by these works, the Brahmans became divided into different castes."

REFERENCES

1. R.V., i., 104, 9.
2. *Ibid.*, viii., 21, 14; vii., 21, 9.

3. *Ibid.,* i., 57, 5; iv., 17, 18.
4. More especially the progenitor of the Āryans after the Deluge. The tradition of the first created man and woman is probably the foundation of the story of Yama and Yamī, as we shall see further on. The Hindus have several Legends of the Deluge, in which Manu invariably corresponds to the Biblical Noah. The following from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is the oldest on record:

   "In the beginning, they brought to Manu water for washing. As he was washing, a fish came into his hands (which spake to him), 'Preserve me; I shall save thee'. (Manu inquired), 'From what wilt thou save me?' (The fish replied), 'A flood shall sweep away all these creatures; from it will of rescue thee'. (Manu asked), 'How (shall) thy preservation (be effected) ?' The fish said, 'So long as we are small, we are in great peril, forfish devour fish; thou shalt preserve me first in a jar. When I grow too large for the jar, then thou shalt dig a trench, and preserve me in that. When I grow too large for the trench, them thou shalt carry me away to the Ocean. I shall then be beyond the reach f danger.' Straightway he became a large fish, and said, 'Now in such and such a year the flood will come; thou shalt therefore construct a ship, and resort to me; thou shalt embark in the ship when the flood rises, and I shall deliver thee from it'. Having thus preserved the fish, Manu carried him away to the sea. Then in the same year which the fish had enjoined, he constrcutred a ship, and resorted to it. When the flood rose, Manu embarked in the ship. The fish swam towards him. He fastened the cable of the ship to the fish's horn. By this mens he passed over the northern mountain. The fish said, 'I have delivered thee; fasten the ship to a tree. But lest the water should cut thee off shilst thou art on the mountain, as much as the water subsides, so much thou shalt descend after it.' He accordingly descended as muc as the water subsided. Wherefore also this, viz., 'Manu's descent' is (the name) of the northern mountain. Now, the

flood had swept way all these creatures; so Manu alone was left here. Desirous of offspring, he lived worshipping and toiling in arduous religious rites. Among these he also sacrificed with the pa+ka offering. He cast clarified butter, thickened milk, whey and curds, as an oblation into the waters. Thence in a year a woman was produced."

The name of the woman thus produced was Īḍā. "From Manu and Īḍā, we are expressly told, the race, known as that of Manu, *i.e.*, the race of men, was descendend." Manu, according to the above legend, was the progenitor of all *post*-diluvian men.

The Legend of the Deluge in the Mahābhārata resembles the above with some important additions. It states that eight persons were saved from the waters; that seeds of all living things were preserved; and gives the duration of the flood as "for many years". It also points to the highest peak of "Himavat" (Himālaya) as the place where the ship was tied, and for which it was called *Naubandha*.

5. *Hist. of Ind. Lit.*, p. 38.
6. *Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. i., p. 41.
7. R.V., i., 29.
8. *Ibid.*, i., 115, 6.
9. *Ibid.*, i., 36, 14, 15.
10. R.V., iv., 11, 6.
11. *Ibid.*, i., 35, 3; 115, 6.
12. *Ibid.*, v., 85, 7, 8.
13. *Ibid.*, viii., 45, 33, 4.
14. *Ibid.*, i., 91, 15.
15. *Ibid.*, i, 157, 9.
16. *Ibid.*, i., 97
17. Lt. *pec,* Welsh *pech,* Heb. *pasha.*
18. Principal Tulloch, *The Christian Doctrine of Sin.*
19. R.V., i., 25, 2.
20. *Ibid.*, vii., 89, 5.
21. *Ibid.*, vii., 87, 7.
22. R.V., ii., 28, 5, 6.

23. *Ibid.*, ii., 29, 5.
24. *Ibid.*, viii. 56, 14.
25. *Ibid.*, iv., 12, 4.
26. *Ibid.*, i., 24, 15.
27. *Ibid.*, i., 24, 8, 9.
28. *Ibid.*, ii., 29, 1.
29. *Ibid.*, ii., 27, 14.
30. *Ibid.*, x., 63, 10.
31. *Ibid.*, viii., 18, 17.
32. *Ibid.*, vii., 32, 27.
33. *Ibid.*, i., 99, 1.
34. R.V., ii., 33, 3.
35. *Ibid.*, vii., 86, 6.
36. *Ibid.*, i., 38, 6.
37. *Ibid.*, vii., 57, 4.
38. *Ibid.*, iv., 54, 3.
39. *Ibid.*, vii., 86, 5.
40. *Ibid.*, vii., 52, 2.
41. *Taittiriya Br.*, iii., 7, 12, 3; Muir, vol. v., p. 66.
42. A.V., v., 30, 4; Muir.
43. R.V., vii., 86, 2, 3, 4.
44. *Ibid.*, vii., 88, 5, 6.
45. R.V., viii., 58, 11.
46. *Ibid.*, viii., 4, 10; v., 36, 1; viii., 66, 4.
47. A. B. vi., 11.
48. R.V., i., 191, 10.
49. *Ibid.*, i., 116, 7.
50. R.V., viii., 2, 12.
51. Manu, x., 55.
52. R.V., iii., 53, 4.
53. *Ibid.*, i., 116, 10.
54. *Ibid.*, vi., 39, 3.
55. *Ibid.*, vi., 44, 23.
56. *Ibid.*, viii., 19, 36.
57. R.V., i., 62, 11.
58. *Ibid.*, vii., 26, 3.

59. *Ibid.*, vii., 18, 2.
60. *Ibid.*, i., 119, 5.
61. *Ibid.*, i., 167, 5.
62. Muir, vol. v., p. 458.
63. "There can be little doubt that polygamy, as we find it among the early races in their transition from the pastocal to the agricultural life, was customary in India. We read in Herodotus (v., 5) that, amongst the Thracians, it was usual, after the death of a man, to find out who had been the most beloved of his wives, and to sacrifice her upon his tomb. Mela (ii., 2) gives the same as the custom of the Getae. Herodotus (iv., 71) asserts a similar fact of the Scythians, and Pausanias (iv., 2) of the Greeks; while our Teutonic Mythology is full of instances of the same feeling." (M. Müller's *Hist. Anc. Sans. Lit.*, p. 48).
64. "There is no text to countenance laws which allow the marriage of children and prohibit the re-marriage of child-widows, and the unhallowed rite of burning the widow with the corpse of her husband is both against the spirit and the letter of the Veda". (*Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. i., p. 313).
65. R.V., x., 402. Compare Deuteronomy, xxv., 5; Genesis, xxxviii.
66. Manu, ix., 69. And Gautama (xviii., 41) says, "A woman whose husband is dead, and whose desires offspring, may bare a son to her brother-in-law".
67. R.V., ii., 17, 7.
68. *Ibid.*, i., 117, 7.
69. *Ibid.*, x., 27, 11, 12.
70. *Ibid.*, vii., 104, 1, 3.
71. *Ibid.*, iv., 18, 10.
72. A.V., viii., 8, 7; R.V., ii., 14, 6, 7.
73. R.V., x., 102, 3; iv., 13, 4; viii., 39; vi., 60, 6.
74. R.V., x., 34.
75. *Ibid.*, i., 152, 1; vii., 49, 3; ii., 27, 4; iv., 5, 5; ii., 35, 6.
76. R.V., i., 42, 3; i., 33, 3.

77. *Ibid.,* x., 107.
78. *Ibid.,* vii., 104, 8, 25, 5; i., 167, 4; ii., 29, i; x., 34, 3; vii., 104, 24.
79. R.V., vi., 52, 2; A.V., iii., 30.
80. Rom., ii., 15.
81. "The principle of the order of the world, of the regularity of cosmic phenomena, was conceived by the Ṛṣis to have existed as a principle before the manifestation of any phenomena. The argument would seem to be somewhat as follows: The phenomena of the world are shifting and changeable, but the principle regulating the periodical recurrence of phenomena is constant; fresh phenomena are continually reproduced, but the principle of order remains the same; the principle, therefore, existed already when the earliest, it has given birth to them. This parentage is exactly parallel to that of heaven and earth. Heaven and earth are the first according to, or by reason of, the *ṛta;* the gods are born by *ṛta.*" (H.W. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Ṛg-Veda).*
82. R.V., i., 31, 7.
83. *Ibid., i.,* 91, 1.
84. *Ibid.,* v., 55, 4.
85. *Ibid.,* v., 63, 2.
86. R.V., ix., 113. Professor Roth says respecting this hymn, "If it were necessary, we might here find the most powerful weapons against the vew which has been lately revived and proclaimed as new, that Persia was the only birthplace of the idea of immortality; and that even the nations of Europe had derived it from that quarter; as if the religious spirit of every gifted race was not able to arrive at it by its own strength".
87. *Ibid.,* iii., 60, 2; iv., 35, 8.
88. R.V., x., 15, 1, 2.
89. *Ibid.,* i., 91, 1.
90. *Ibid.,* vi., 75, 10; vii., 35, 12.
91. *Ibid.,* x., 15, 1, 2.

92. R.V., x., 14.
93. Similarly, Hesiod in his *Works and Days* describes the "golden age":
    "When gods alike and mortals rose to birth,
    A golden race, th' immortals formed on earth
    Of many-languaged men: they lived of old,
    When Kronos reign'd in heaven—an age of gold.
    Like gods they lived with calm untroubled mind,
    Free from the toil and anguish of our kind.
    Nor sad decrepit age approaching nigh,
    Their limbs unnerved with frail infirmity;
    Strangers to ill, thy nature's banquets proved,
    Rich in earth's fruits, and of the best beloved:
    They sank to earth as opiate slumber stole
    Soft o'er the sense, and whelm'd the willing soul.
    Theirs was each good: the grain exuberant soil
    Pour'd the full harvest, uncompell'd by toil.
    The virtuous many dwelt in common blest,
    And all unenvying shared what all in peace possessed."
94. R.V., ix., 113, 7, 8.
95. *Ibid.*, x., 14, 8, 9, 11.
96. *Ibid.*, x., 14, 7; x., 15, 8.
97. *Ibid.*, x., 15, 8.x
98. R.V., x., 14, 7, 8, 9.
99. *Ibid.*, x., 154, 3.
100. The Homeric men believed that the soul, so soon as death loosened its bands, quitted the body by the mouth or a mornal would; and, either restless and unhappy while the body was unhonoured by funeral rites, haunted the earth; or, when it had been so honoured, descended to live a ghostly life in Hades. Achilles exclaims, when he sees the shades of Patroklos: "O strange! in the house of Hades there is soul and shadow, but no mind!". (Fairbairn *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*).
101. R.V., x., 16.
102. A.V., 18, 21, 24, 25.

103. *La Veda,* p. 186.
104. R.V., x., 135, 1.
105. A.V., xviii., 4, 31.
106. R.V., x., 14, 11.
107. *Ibid.*, iii., 53, 4, 6.
108. A.V., iv., 37, 11.
109. R.V., x., 14, 10, 12.
110. *Ibid.*, x., 97, 16.
111. R.V., ix., 73, 8.
112. *Ibid.,* i., 121, 13.
113. *Ibid.,* iv., 5, 5.
114. *Ibid.,* ii., 29, 6.
115. *Ibid.,* i., 133, 3.
116. Muir, vol. v., pp. 314, 5, 6.
117. *Hist. of Ind. Lit.,* p. 73.
118. "At that time there were three features of caste not as yet developed: 1st, restriction of trade or occupation; 2nd, objections to eating with people other than caste man; 3rd objections to inter-marriatge" (A Lecture delivered by Pundit Sivanaha Sastri, M.A., in Madras, Nov. 19, 1881).
119. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. ii., pp. 311, 2.
120. See p. 7, *ante.*
121. R.V., x., 10, 11, 12.
122. Dr. Wilson's *India Three Thousand Years Ago*.
123. Professor H.H. Wilson.
124. R.V., vii., 86, 5.
125. *Ibid.,* i., 61, 12.
126. *Ibid.,* x., 28, 3.
127. *Ibid.,* v., 29, 7.
128. *Ibid.,* iv., 18, 13.
129. Manu, 10, 106.
130. R.V., viii., 16-18.
131. In the original Brahman.
132. R.V., iv., 50, 7, 8.

133. *Ibid.,* vi., 51, 2, 3.
134. The following is a concise statement of the doctrine from the Jātimālā, "In the first creation by Brahmā, Brahmans proceeded, witht he Veda, from the mouth of Brahmā. From his arms Kṣatriyas sprung: so from his things Vaiṣ yas: from his foot Śūdras were produced; all with their females. The lord of creation, viewing, them, said, 'What shall be your occupation?' They replied, 'We are not our own masters, O God, command us what to undertake'. Viewing and comparing their labours, he made the first tribe superiod over the rest. As the first had great inclinastion for the divine praises (*Brahma-veda*), therefore he was Brahman. The protector from ill (*Kṣayate*) was Kṣatriya. Him whose profession (*Veṣa*) consists in commerce, which promotes the success of wars, for the protection of himself and mankind, and in husbandary, and attendance on cattle, he called *Vaiśya*. The other should volunatily serve the three tribes, and therefore become a Śūdra: he should humble himself at their feet."
135. R.V., v., 53, 9; x., 75, 6.
136. *Ibid.*, i., 126, 7.
137. *Ibid.,* vi., 30, 18: v., 53, 9.
138. *Ibid.,* iii., 53, 14.
139. *Ibid.,* vii., 95, 2; i., 19, 7, 71, 7.
140. Manu, ii., 21, 2.
141. R.V., x., 87, 2.
142. *Ibid.*, i., 103, 3; x., 102, 3; viii., 24, 27; i., 51, 5; iii., 12, 6; ii, 15, 4; i., 58, 8, 9; vii., 104, 2.
143. R.V., i., 100, 18; ii., 20, 7; iii., 34, 9; ii., 20, 7.
144. Wilson's *V. P.,* vol. ii., pp. 184, 5.
145. Manu, iv., 80, 81.
146. R.V., 60, 6; x., 38, 3.
147. Lithuanian Wie+zpatis.
148. R.V., vii., 33, 3.
149. *Ibid.,* iii., 53, 12.
150. *Ibid.,* x., 98, 5, 6.

151. The following show that the Ṛṣi and the Priest or Brahman were identical at a very early age: R.V., i., 81; i., 164, 35; ii., 12, 6; v., 40, 8; ii., 20, 4, vi., 21, 8; ii., 19, 8; x., 95, 5; vii., 28, 2; vii., 70, 5; i., 177, 5.
152. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.*
153. *Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. ii. p. 337.

CHAPTER V

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF THE VEDAS

"Fecisiti nos propter te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te."—AUGUSTINE.

The term "Soteriology" is used in this chapter to denote all the means employed by the Vedic Āryans to please the gods and to obtain happiness, both in this world, and in the world to come.

1. Prayer and Praise

"As far back as we can trace the life of man, we find the river of prayer and praise flowing as naturally as it is flowing now. We cannot find its beginning because we cannot find the beginning of the soul."[1] It is no exaggeration to state that no nation appears at the dawn of history so full of prayer and praise as the Hindu Āryans. Their sacred hymns are called *Sūktas*, "Laudations"; and "scarifices of the heart sweeter than butter and honey to Indra".[2] Yea, "they are even as oxen, bulls and cows to Agni".[3] "The loving praises of his worshippers, uttered from the soul,[4] proceed to Indra as messages, and touch his heart." "They enable him to overcome all his mighty enemies."[5] "The gods are propitiated and their vigour enhanced by prayer and priase."[6] "The adorable Agni is magnified by the hymns, the prayers, the praises of his worshippers."[7] One Ṛṣi addressing Varuṇa

says, "To propitiate thee, O Varuṇa, we bind thy mind with hymns, as the charioteer his weary steed"; and another declares "that prayer is his best armour".[8]

In these hymns the gods are lauded, partly on account of their intrinsic excellence, but chiefly on account of the benefits which they are supposed to bestow on their votaries. Prayers were offered to them for the necessaries of life and the removal of calamities. And in their most serious moments, when the consciousness of sin asserted itself powerfully, the old bards implored the deities to be gracious and to forgive their sins. "If, Varuṇa, we have ever committed an offence against a benefactor, a friend, a companion, a brother, a near neighbour, or, Varuṇa, a dumb man, remove it from us. If like gamesters, who cheat at play, we commit offences knowingly, or unknowingly, do thou, divine Varuṇa, extricate us from them all, as from loosened bonds, so that we may be dear, Varuṇa, to thee."[9] These prayers and praises were offered in childlike confidence that the gods would accept them, for without faith *(śraddhā)* offerings and prayers are vain.[10]

Prayer and praise are the spontaneous expression of the feelings of dependence upon, and moral relationship to, God. The feeling of dependence upon some one, higher and greater than himself, naturally leads man to pray for the help which he needs, and to render thanks givings and praise for it when received. And the feeling of moral relationship to God, involving as it does the consciousness of sin, naturally leads him to cry for pardon and reconciliation.

2. Sacrifice

Sacrifice (*Yajña)* is the soul of Veda. It is older than the hymns, for they were composed for its celebration. "Viṣṇu and Indra made the spacious world" for the sake of sacrifice."[11]

And the "Lord of creatures" initiated sacrifice in the beginning as the means by which he created the Universe ! The first act performed by Manu on his descent from the ark, after the deluge, was to offer sacrifice. "Sacrifice is the axle of the world's wheel and the fecundating power of all things."[12] It is eternal and universal, offered by gods as well as by men.[13]

We observe, however, that the sacrifices of the earliest Vedic ritual were very much simpler than those of the later ceremonial. With the rise and growth of the priesthood, sacrifice was developed to such an extent as to be considered, not only the chief means of propitiating and pleasing the deities, but the source of gods, men, and the Universe ! By sacrifice the gods created all things.[14] By sacrifice they became immortal.[15] By sacrifice the ancient Fathers, the first sacrificers, delivered the world from chaos, gave birth to the sun, kindled the stars, and became equal to the greatest of the gods.[16] And by sacrifice their children are exalted to the same sphere of immortality and blessedness. "Thou dost not perish, O sacrificer ! nor thou who offerest libations, nor thou, O godly man !"[17] "Indra chooses for his intimate friend the man who presents offerings, but desires no friendship with him who offers no libations."[18] Those who offer particular sacrifices "become Agni, Varuṇa, or Indra, and attain to union and to the same spheres with these gods respectively".[19] "Sin contaminates not, difficulties assail not; neither does distress at any time afflict the mortal, to whose sacrifice Indra and Varuṇa repair."[20]

When the sacrificial victim was consigned to the fire, the following formula was addressed to it, "Thou art the annulment of sins committed by the gods. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by the Fathers. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by men. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by ourselves. Whatever sins we have

committed by day or by night, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed sleeping or waking, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed knowing or unknowing, thou art the annulment thereof. Thou art the annulment of sin."[21]

The most ancient division of sacrifice appears to have been into three classes : (1) *Haviṣ, Havir-yajña, Iṣṭi,* meat offerings; (2) *Paśu, Paśubandha,* animal offerings; and (3) *Soma, Saumya adhvara,* soma offerings. We read in the Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa: "*Haviryajñair, vai deva imaṁ lokaṁ abhyajayaṁ, autarikṣaṁ paśumadbhiḥ, somair amum;*" *i.e.,* by meat offerings the godly ones conquered this world, by animal offerings the middle regions, by soma offerings that world, or the highest regions. To this a fourth class, *Pāka-yajña,* or little sacrifices, called also domestic offerings *(gṛhakarma),* being partly meat and partly animal, was added. Manu is said to have sacrificed with a *Pāka.*[22] In Gautama's classification,[23] *Pāka-yajña* is made the first chief division, and *Paśubandha* is included in *Haviryajña.* These three classes have seven subdivisions in each.

Pākayajñas[24] were chiefly offerings of cakes, soups, grains, fruits, butter, milk, and honey.

Haviryajñas[25] had, in addition, animal offerings, such as men, buffaloes, goats, cows, sheep, and horses. In R.V., vi., 17, 11, Pūṣan and Viṣṇu are invoked to dress a hundred buffaloes *(satammahiṣani)* to Indra; and in another place the Ṛṣi Gṛtsamada exclaims, "Agni, descendant of Bhārata, thou art entirely ours, when sacrificed to with pregnant kine, with barren cows *(rasa)* or bulls *(ukṣha)*".[26] In the Atharva Veda, xi., 2, 9, we read, "Thine, O Bhava, are these five victims, divided as cows, horses, men, goats, and sheep". The same sacrificial victims are mentioned in the Ait. Br., book ii.[27]

Somayajñas[28] derived their name from the intoxicating juice

of the Soma plant, which formed their chief substance. They were, however, accompanied with meat and animal offerings; and so corresponded to the meat and drink offerings of the Jews. *Somayajñas* lasting one day were called *Ekahas,* and those lasting more than one day *Ahinas.* When they lasted more than twelve days they were *Sattras,* or sessions. There were *Sattras* which lasted several months, a whole year, and even several years; in theory there were some that lasted a thousand years. But, whether short or long, the Soma ceremonies required elaborate preparation, and entailed much expense. Notwithstanding, they seem to have been very frequent at one time; a thousand, and even ten thousands, are spoken of in the Veda.[29]

Though Gautama's classification of the Vedic sacrifices is the simplest and commonest, it fails, equally with all other classifications, to give an adequate idea of their number and complexity : *e.g.,* besides the seven usually mentioned as constituting the *Somayajñas,* there are others far more costly, and lasting many days, such as the *Rājasūya,* the consecration of a universal king, the *Aśvamēdha,* the sacrifice of a horse, the *Puruṣamēdha,* the sacrifice of a man, and the *Sarvamēdha,* the "all sacrifice". Indeed, it is calculated, that if all the varieties specified in the texts were reckoned up, they would amount to more than a thousand !

The three classes of sacrifices are called the thrice seven mystic rites comprised in Agni, because without Agni (fire) they could not be celebrated.[30] For the performance of the first, one *Śrauta* fire, the *Gārhapatya,* was sufficient, but for the last two, three *Śrauta* fires, the *Gārhapatya, Ahavaniya,* and *Dakṣiṇa,* were necessary. The last two *Śrauta* fires were kindled from the first. These three fires are alluded to in R.V., ii., 36, 4, "Bring the gods hither, sage, and offer sacrifice : at the three altars seat thee willingly, O priest".

The high antiquity of the Soma cultus is attested by the references to it in the Iranian Zend-Avesta. The *haoma* of the Zend-Avesta is etymologically the same as the *Soma* of the Veda. Both are from the root *su,* Zend *hu,* which signifies "to beget," and "to drop," or " to press out juice"; thus showing that Soma-sacrifice was prevalent before the separation of the Hindu Āryans from their brethren, the Iranians. It seems, however, to have received a new impulse on the Indian territory, as the hymns of the Veda, especially those of the ninth book of the Ṛg, exhibit it in a remarkable state of development. There Soma is addressed as a god in the highest strains of veneration; all divine powers belong to him, all blessings are his to bestow. "We have drunk the Soma, we have become immortal, we have entered into light, we have known the gods. What can an enemy now do to us, or what can the malice of any mortal effect, O thou immortal god?"[31]

In common with the Scythians,[32] the *Aśvamēdha,* or horse-sacrifice, was a very ancient rite among the Hindu Āryans, hymns 162 and 163 of the first Maṇḍala of the Ṛg-Veda being used at its celebration. It was regarded as the chief of animal sacrifices; and, in later times, its efficacy was so exaggerated, that a hundred horse-sacrifices were supposed to entitle the sacrificer to displace even Indra from his throne in heaven !

According to R.V., i.. 162, the sacrifice of a horse was preceded by that of a goat to Pūṣan. "When they (the Priests) lead before the horse, which is decked with pure-gold ornaments, the offering firmly grasped, the spotted goat, bleats while walking onward; it goes the path beloved by Indra and Pūṣan." This goat, destined for all the gods, is led first with the fleet courser, as Pūṣan's share, for Tvāṣṭṛ himself raises to glory this pleasant offering which is brought with

the horse. "When thrice at the proper seasons men lead around the sacrificial horse which goes to the gods, Pūṣan's share comes first, the goat which announces the sacrifice to the gods."

According to Kātyāyana, 609 other animal victims were required at the horse-sacrifice, 260 of which were forest animals, such as lions, tigers, birds, snakes and frogs. All these were tied to 21 posts; but the forest animals were released after the fire had been carried round them, so that only 349 were actually slaughtered. At the final ceremony, the *ava brathiṣṭi,* or the oblation at the cleansing bath, a human being was sacrificed. This, however, is a later development of the *Aśvamēdha,* for there is nothing in the most ancient hymns to warrant such a multiplication of animals and posts. One post only is mentioned in the hymns, to which the horse is bound, and one "goat, the portion of Pūṣan".

The immolators were to deal gently with the innocent beast, giving it as little pain as possible. "If some one strike thee with the heel, or with the whip, that thou mayest lie down, and thou art snorting with all thy might, then I purify all this with my prayer, as with a spoon of clarified butter at the sacrifice. The axe approaches the thirty-four ribs of the swift horse, beloved of the gods. Do thou wisely keep the limbs whole, find out each joint and strike. One strikes the brilliant horse, two hold it, this is the custom. Those of thy limbs which I have seasonably prepared, I sacrifice in the fire as bulls offered to the gods. May no greedy and unskilful immolator, missing with the sword, throw thy mangled limbs together. Indeed, thou diest not thus, thou sufferest not; thou goest to the gods on easy paths."

When the horse was tied to the sacrificial post, the bystanders prayed that the halter and heel ropes of the noble animal, the head ropes, the girths and any other requisite,

the grass that was put into his mouth, whatever the flies may have eaten of his raw flesh, whatever was smeared on the brush or the axe, or the hands or nails of the immolator; the place of going forth, of tarrying, of rolling on the ground; the water that he had drunk, the grass that he had eaten, might all be with him among the gods. Then the roasting and cooking of his flesh are minutely described; and every bit of him, even to the smallest that might have fallen from the spit, must be given to the longing gods. And the whole ceremony ends with the petition, "May this horse give us cattle and horses, men, progeny, and all sustaining wealth. May it keep us from sin; may the horse of this sacrifice give us strength."

Though human sacrifices were known during the Mantras, or oldest hymns of the Veda, the evidence is too scanty for us to conclude that they were *common*. The ninetieth hymn of the tenth Maṇḍala of the R.V., in which *Puruṣa,* the primeval male, is described as "cut to pieces and offered as a sacrifice by the gods," shows that the idea of offering a man, *Puruṣa,* was familiar to the ancient Āryans. It is true that *Puruṣa,* in the hymn, is an imaginary being; but the description of his immolation is so real and minute, as to justify the conclusion that it was taken from the well-known manner in which human beings were sacrificed. "The gods immolated him on the sacrificial grass; they bound him," doubtless, to the post *(yūpa)*; "seven pieces of wood were laid for him round the fire," and "thrice seven pieces of fuel were employed". The same idea underlies the immolation of Prajāpati, who offered himself a sacrifice for the devas or gods; and of Viśvakarman, who offered himself a sacrifice to himself. In R.V. vii., 19, 4, we read, "Thou (Indra) hast destroyed, along with the Maruts, numerous enemies at the sacrifice to the gods; thou hast put to sleep with thy thunderbolt

the *Dasyus, Chumuri,* and *Dhuni,* on behalf of *Dabhiti*". There seems to be an allusion here to the practice of sacrificing the enemies of the Āryans to the gods; like the three hundred citizens of Perusia, whom Augustus sacrificed in one day to his deified uncle *(Divo Julio)*; or the Grecian navigators, whom the barbarians of Tauris offered to Artemis whenever cast upon their sea-shores.

Śunaśepha, the son of Ajigarta, is the author of the twenty-fourth and six following hymns in the first Maṇḍala of the Ṛg-Veda. Praising Varuṇa in the twenty-fourth hymn, he prays, "I implore thee for that (life)[33] which the institutor of the sacrifice solicits with oblations, Varuṇa, undisdainful, bestow a thought upon us; much lauded, take not away our life. This (thy praise) they repeat to me by night and by day; this knowledge speaks to my heart. May he whom the fettered Śunaśepha has invoked, may the regal Varuṇa set us free." "Śunaśepha, seized and bound to the three-footed tree, has invoked the son of Aditi. May the regal Varuṇa, wise and irresistible, liberate him; may he let loose his bonds." Here Śunaśepha represents himself as "seized and bound to the three-footed tree," which is said to be the sacrificial post, a sort of tripod. He prays that Varuṇa may "set him free," and "that his life may not be taken away". There is reference to the same circumstance in R.V., v., 2, 7, "O Agni, thou hast released the bound Śunaśepha from the pale, for he had prayed; thus take from us, too, these ropes, O sagacious Hotar, after thou hast settled here". Looking at these passages alone, perhaps we are not justified in concluding that Śunaśepha was bound as a victim to be sacrificed. His "bonds" and "ropes" may be taken in a figurative sense, denoting the fetters of sin, especially as we have seen before that sin is often compared to a "bond," or a "rope," in the Veda; and, indeed, it is so compared in the last verse of this

very hymn. We are not, however, left in uncertainty. The Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa of the R.V. supplies full particulars of the circumstances referred to in the hymns, and leaves no doubt as to the fact that "Śunaśepha was bound to the three-footed tree" for the purpose of being sacrificed.

Hariśacandra, of the family of the Ikṣavākus, was a king, who, though he had a hundred wives, had no son. This was the greatest calamity that could befall him; for by seeing the face of a son *alone,* could he pay his debts to his ancestors, and obtain immortality. Consequently, by the advice of the sage, Nārada, he went to Varuṇa and prayed, "May a son be born to me, and I shall sacrifice him to you". Varuṇa assented. A son was born to him, called Rohita. Then Varuṇa said to Hariśacandra, "A son is born to thee, sacrifice him to me". Hariścandra replied, "When an animal is more than ten days old, it can be sacrificed. May he be older than ten days, and I shall sacrifice him to thee."

Hariścandra, having exhausted all excuses, was at last under the dire necessity of sacrificing his son; but on making this known to him, Rohita said "No," took his bow, and departed to the forest, where he wandered for a year. Varuṇa was angry, and caused Hariścandra to be afflicted with a dangerous disease. Rohita, having heard of this, returned home; but Indra, in the form of a Brahman, met him and told him to travel. He felt bound to obey a Brahman, and so he travelled another year in the forest. And when he came home again, at the end of the second year, Indra met him in the same form, and told him, "A traveller's legs are like blossoming branches; he himself grows and gathers the fruit; all his wrongs vanish, destroyed by his exertions on the road; and so 'Travel' ". Rohita travelled four years more, coming home at the end of each year, and sent back again by Indra in the form of a Brahman. During the sixth year oi his sojourn, he

met a starving Ṛṣi Ajigarta, the son of Suyavasa, who had three sons, the second of whom was Śunaśepha. Rohita said to him, "Ṛṣi, I give you a hundred cows, I ransom myself with one of these thy sons". The father, pointing to the eldest, said, "Not him". "Nor him," said the mother, embracing the youngest. And the parents bargained to give Śunaśepha, the middle son. Rohita gave a hundred cows to Ajigarta, took Śunaśepha, and went from the forest to the village. Addressing his father, he said, "Father, Death ! I ransom myself by him". The father went to Varuṇa and said, "I shall sacrifice this man to you". Varuṇa said, "Yes, for a Brahman is better than a Kṣatriya," and commanded him to perform a Rājasūya sacrifice. Hariścandra took Śunaśepha to be the victim for the day when the Soma was offered to the gods.

Viśāmitra was his *Hotṛ* priest, Jamadagni his *Adhvaryu* priest, Vasiṣṭha the *Brahman,* Ayasya the *Udgatṛ* priest. When Śunaśepha had been prepared, they found nobody to bind him to the sacrificial post. And Ajigarta, the son of Suyavasa said, "Give me another hundred, and I shall bind him". They gave him another hundred, and he bound him. When he had been prepared and bound, when the Apri hymn had been sung, and he had been led round the fire, they found nobody to kill him. And Ajigarta, the son of Suyavasa, said, "Give me another hundred, and I shall kill him". They gave him another hundred, and he came whetting his sword. Then Śunaśepha thought, "They will really kill me, as if I were not a man". "Death ! I shall pray to the gods." He went with a hymn to Prajāpati (Lord of creatures), the first of the gods. Prajāpati said to him, "Agni (fire) is the nearest of gods, go to him". He went with a hymn to Agni, and Agni said to him, "Sāvitri (the progenitor) rules all creatures, go to him. He went with a hymn to Sāvitri, and Sāvitri said to him, "Thou art bound for Varuṇa, the king, go to him". He went

with a hymn to Varuṇa, the king, and Varuṇa said to him, "Agni is the mouth of the gods, the kindest god; praise him, and we shall set thee free". Thus he praised Agni, and Agni said to him, " Praise the Viśve Devah. and we shall set thee free". Thus he praised the Viśve Devah, and they said to him, "Indra is the greatest, mightiest, strongest, and friendliest of the gods; praise him, and we shall set thee free". Thus he praised Indra, and Indra was pleased, and said to him, "Praise the Aśvins, and we shall set thee free". Thus he praised the Aśvins, and they said to him, "Praise Uṣas (dawn), and we shall set thee free". Thus he praised Uṣas with three verses. While each verse was uttered, his fetters were loosed, and Hariśacandra grew better; and when the last verse was said, all his fetters were loosed, and Hariścandra was well again.

The Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa goes on to state that the priests asked Śunaśepha to perform the sacrifice of the day, which he did; and when the sacrifice had been performed, Śunaśepha sat down on the lap of Viśvāmitra. Ajigarta then said, "Ṛṣi, give me back my son". Viśvāmitra said, "No; for the gods have given him to me". Śunaśepha became Devarata (Theodotus), the son of Viśvāmitra; and the members of the families of Kapila and Babhru became his relations. Ajigarta said, "Come thou, O son, we, both I and thy mother, call thee away. Thou art by birth an Aṅgirasa, the son of Ajigarta, celebrated as a poet. O Ṛṣi, go not away from the line of thy grandfather; come back to me." Śunaśepha replied, "They have seen thee with a knife in thy hand, a thing that men have never found even amongst Śūdras; thou hast taken the hundred cows for me, O Aṅgiras !" Ajigarta said, "My old son, it grieves me for the wrong that I have done thee; I throw it away; may these hundred cows belong to thee". Śunaśepha replied, "Who once commits a sin, will commit also another sin; thou wilt not abstain from the ways of

Śūdras; what thou hast committed cannot be redressed." Viśvāmitra then said, "Dreadful stood the son of Suyavasa when he went to kill with his knife. Be not his son; come and be my son." Śunaśepha said, "Tell us thyself, O Son of a King, thus as thou art known to us, how I, who am an Aṅgirasa, shall become thy son". Viśvāmitra replied, "Thou shalt be the eldest of my sons, thy offspring shall be the first, thou shalt receive the heritage which the gods have given me, thus I address thee". Śunaśepha replied, "May the leader of the Bhāratas say so in the presence of his agreeing sons, for friendship's and happiness' sake, that I shall become thy son men Viśvāmitra addressed his hundred sons, " Hear me, Madhuchandas, Ṛṣabha, Reṇu, Aṣṭaka, and all ye brothers, believe in his seniority". Fifty of his hundred sons complied, and were blessed; and the other fifty declined, and were cursed to become outcasts.

Max Müller, in his *History of Sanskrit Literature,* makes the following valuable remarks on this legend, which is there given in full :

"The story of Śunaśepha is interesting in many respects. It shows that, at that early time, the Brahmans were familiar with the idea of human sacrifices, and that men who were supposed to belong to the caste of the Brahmans were ready to sell their sons for that purpose." It also "reveals three distinct elements in the early social life of India. These are represented by the royal or reigning family of the Ikṣvākus, by their priests or ministers belonging to several famous Brahmanical races, and by a third class of men living in the forests, such as Ajigarta and his three sons. It is true that Ajigarta is called a Ṛṣi, and one of his sons a Brahman. But even if we accept the Āryan origin of Ajigarta, the seller and butcher of his own son, it is important to remark how great a difference there must have been between the various Āryan

settlers in India. Whether we ascribe this difference to a difference in the time of immigration, or whatever other reason we may assign to it, yet there remains the fact that, with all the vaunted civilisation of the higher Āryan classes, there were Āryan people in India to whom not only a young prince could make the offer of buying their children, but where the father offered himself to bind and kill the son, whom he had sold for a hundred cows. This was a case so startling to the later Brahmans, that the author of the Laws of *Manu* was obliged to allude to it, in order to defend the dignity of his caste. Manu says that hunger is an excuse for many things, and that Ajigarta, although he went to kill his own son, was not guilty of a crime, because he did so to appease his hunger. Now the author of the Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa certainly does not adopt this view, for Ajigarta is there severely abused for his cruelty; so much so, that his son, whom he has sold, considers himself at liberty to leave the family of his parents, and to accept the offer made by Viśvāmitra of being adopted into his family. So revolting, indeed, is the description given of Ajigarta's behaviour in the Brāhmaṇa, that we should rather recognise in him a specimen of the un-Āryan population of India. Such a supposition, however, would be in contradiction with several of the most essential points of the legend, particularly in what regards the adoption of Śunaśepha by Viśvāmitra. Viśvāmitra, though arrived at the dignity of a Brahman, clearly considers the adoption of Śunaśepha Devarata, of the famous Brahmanic family of the Aṅgirasas, as an advantage for himself, and for his descendants; and the Devaratas are indeed mentioned as a famous branch of the Viśvāmitras. Śunaśepha is made his eldest son, and the leader of his brothers, evidently as the defender and voucher of their Brahmanhood, which must have been then of very recent date, because Viśvāmitra himself

is still addressed by Śunaśepha as *Rāja-putra* and *Bharatarṣ-abha.*"[34]

Max Müller doubts the existence of human sacrifices during the Chandas or oldest Vedic period, but sees no reason to doubt its previous existence.[35] Considering, however, that the fullest and clearest account of this practice is found in the Brāhmaṇas, and that during the Brāhmaṇa period sacerdotalism reached its zenith, it is natural to suppose that the practice became more common after the Chandas period. It is repeatedly stated in the Brāhmaṇas, *sarvaṁ, sarvaṁ puruṣa-medha sarvasyāptyai sarvasyāvaruddhyai.* "All, all is the human sacrifice for the obtaining of all, for the gaining of all." "By means of it the sacrificer obtains all."[36] Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa surpassed all things, and became all things by sacrificing with the Puruṣamedha. No wonder then, that it is said, *Puruṣo hi prathama paśūnaṁ.* Man is, indeed, the first of the sacrificial victims."[37] Indeed, so real was the practice that even the name of the man who celebrated the rite for the last time has been preserved. According to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Cyāparṇa Śāyakāyaṇa was the last who consecrated the erection of the altar by the immolation of a human victim.[38]

When Śunaśepha, bound to the sacrificial post, saw his father coming and whetting his knife to strike him, he exclaimed, "They will really kill me, as if I were not a man!" This seems to indicate, that the custom of offering men, or at any rate Brahmans, was falling to desuetude at the time. According to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xiii., 6, 6, 1, there was a typical Puruṣamedha, in which ceremony one hundred and eighty-five human victims of various tribes, characters and professions, were bound to eleven *yūpas* or posts, and after the Puruṣa Sūkta had been uttered over them, and the sacred fire had been carried round them, they were liberated unhurt,

and oblations of butter offered on the sacrificial fire in their stead. Perhaps, this custom was beginning to prevail in the time of Śunaśepha, and hence his exclamation, "They will really kill me, as if I were not a man!" This receives corroboration from the chronological order of Āryan sacrifices, as given in the following passage of the Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa. "The gods killed a man for their victim. But from him thus killed, the part which was fit for a sacrifice went out and entered a horse. Thence the horse became an animal fit for being sacrificed. The gods then killed the horse, but the part fit for being sacrificed went out of it and entered an ox. The gods then killed the ox, but the part fit for being sacrificed went out of it and entered a sheep. Thence, it entered a goat. The sacrificial part remained for the longest time in the goat, hence it became pre-eminently fit for being sacrificed."

Human sacrifices have been offered by all nations at different times in their history. In countries so remote from one another as to preclude all supposition of inter-communication, human sacrifices have invariably prevailed. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, all furnish abundant evidence of this. Caesar's description of the ancient Gauls is applicable to all ancient nations: "When alarmed by any cause of terror, they think that their gods must be appeased; they pollute their altars and temples with human sacrifices ! Under the pretence of religion they violate its very dictates ! Is it not notorious, that to this day, they retain that horrible and savage practice of immolating their fellow-creatures?"

The propitiation of the gods, and the happiness of the sacrificer, are the chief objects of all Vedic sacrifices. "May these invigorating offerings propitiate him."[39] "May we propitiate thee by our sacrifice."[40] "May Jatavedas render the immortal gods pleased by the sacrifice."[41] "He who sacrifices,

propitiates the gods." "For which deity they kill an animal, that deity is propitiated."[42] "Be propitiated, Agni, by these hymns; accept, hero, these sacrificial viands presented with praises; be pleased, Aṅgiras, by our prayers; may the adoration addressed to the gods exalt thee."[43] "May the liberal man ever be prosperous, who propitiates thee with constant oblations and praises; may all the days in his arduous life be prosperous, and may this his sacrifice be productive of reward."[44]

All other nations sacrificed for the same purpose. Herodotus says that the Egyptians believed that the public or private calamities, which might be impending, were arrested by being "turned upon the head" of the victim sacrificed.'[45] The Kelts considered that the favour of the gods could not be secured unless the life of one man were offered up for that of another. The sacrifice of innocent-children or pure virgins was highly esteemed by the Greeks, as the best means of averting calamity at home, and of carrying it abroad among enemies. February is derived from an old Roman word, *Februa,* which was a general term for sacrifices and ceremonies performed at the close of the year. February was the last month in the ancient Roman year, in which it was "held an essential part of filial duty to make atonement on behalf of our parents, by a sacrifice of the greatest value". Professor H.H. Wilson says that the notion of propitiating some divinity by offering to him what was most precious to the sacrificer, was widely diffused throughout the world in old times, as was also the practice of the individual *pledging* himself to act by a solemn promise or vow. "We might infer," he proceeds, "that the practice was not unknown to the patriarchal era, from the conduct of Abraham when commanded to offer up his son; for although he would not under any circumstances have hesitated to obey the divine command,

yet he might, consistently with his obedience, have expressed some surprise at the injunction, had the purport of it been wholly unfamiliar. At a later date, in the Jewish history, we have a similar sort of sacrifice, under a solemn previous engagement in the vow of Jephtha; and it is worthy of remark, that one of the causes assigned by the Greek writers to the detention of the fleet at Aulis, and consequent sacrifice of Iphigenia, was Agamemnon's violation of the vow which he had made to offer to Diana the most lovely thin"; which the year in which his daughter was born should produce. Iphigenia was that thing, and the sacrifice was insisted on in satisfaction of that vow. The offering of children to Moloch, subsequently borrowed by the Jews from their idolatrous neighbours, originated probably in a similar feeling, which, it is evident, exercised a very extensive influence over the nations of West Asia in remote antiquity; and, as appears from the story of Śunaśepha, was not confined to that quarter, but had reached the opposite limits of Asia at a period at least prior by ten or twelve centuries to the Christian era."[46]

There was no temple or sacred place set apart for the performance of sacrifices in the remote Vedic age. They were performed either on the domestic hearth, which was used for ordinary household purposes, or in an enclosure connected with the house, or in a special place selected for the purpose; the dimension and situation of which changed according to the nature and requirements of the ceremonies. Such a place was consecrated for the observance of a particular rite, and, when the observance of that rite was at an end, it ceased to be a sacred place. If used again for the same purpose, it required to be consecrated anew.

All Vedic sacrifices were either perpetual *(nitya)* or occasional *(anitya)*. Perpetual sacrifices were compulsory, *i.e.,* must be offered at stated times, or on the occurrence of

certain events; occasional sacrifices were voluntary, *i.e.,* might be performed, according to the will of the sacrificer, in fulfilment of some vow, or for the gratification of some wish.

In the Ṛg-Veda, we read that prayers and libations were offered three times a day; namely, morning, mid-day, and noon.[47]

3. The Sacrificers

Originally the father of a family was the priest who offered sacrifice for his own household, and hence was, and still is, called *Yajamāna,* which means, literally, the Sacrificer.[48] When the family grew into a tribe, and the father into a chief, it became necessary to have others to assist him; but he was still the lord at his own sacrifice, for ordered by him the priests performed it.[49] And when the tribe became a nation, and tfle chief a king, he gradually relinquished the sacerdotal functions in favour of those who had been his assistants, purohitas; and who by this time had accustomed themselves to look upon the priesthood as their profession.[50] And, lastly, when these purohitas, by the cultivation of learning, and the assumption of mysterious powers, usurped supreme authority alike over king and subjects, the sacerdotal caste was fully established.

The Priestly tribe was divided into four chief priests, each having three men to help him; viz., (1) *Hotṛ,* (2) *Adhvaryu,* (3) *Udgatṛ,* and (4) *Brahman.* These sixteen priests were called *Ṛtvij,* or those who sacrifice according to the rules. The whole number was only wanted for Soma sacrifices. For the Agnihotra, one priest, an Adhvaryu, was sufficient; for the Darśapurṇamāsa, four priests; for the Cāturmāsya, five; for the Paśubandha, six; and for the Agniṣṭoma, sixteen. At Sattras, which was exclusively a priest's sacrifice, the Yajamāna himself, if a good Brahman, became one of the Ṛtvijs.

The duty of the *Hotṛs* (callers) was to recite loudly and distinctly certain hymns of the Ṛg-Veda, in praise of the deities to whom any particular act of the sacrificer was addressed. Their duties are minutely recorded in I the Brāhmaṇas of the *Bahvṛcas,* such as the Kauṣitaki, I and Aitarēya Brāhmaṇas. The *Udgatṛs* (singers) sang the hymns which form the collection of the Sāma-Veda. Their duties are prescribed in the Brāhmaṇas of the Chāndogas. The *Adhvaryus* (persons of the ceremonies) uttered the Mantras of the Yajur-Veda in a low voice. Besides, to them was entrusted all the hard manual labour of the sacrifice. "They had to measure the sacrificial ground *(yajñabhūmi),* to build the altar *(vedi),* to prepare the sacrificial implements, to fetch wood and water, to light the fire, to bring and immolate the animals, press the Soma, and throw the oblations into the fire. They formed, as it would seem, the lowest class of priests, and their acquirements were more of a practical than of an intellectual character. Some of the offices which would naturally fall to the lot of the Adhvaryus were considered so degrading that other persons besides the priests were frequently employed in them. The Samitri, for instance, who had to slay the animal, was not a priest, he need not even be a Brahman, and the same applies to the Vaikartas, the butchers, and the so-called Carmasādhvaryus (the assistants of the Adhvaryus). The number of hymns and invocations which they had to use at the sacrifices was smaller than that of the other priests. These, however, they had to learn by heart. The Brahman was the general controller of the sacrificial performance. In a sitting posture he had to watch carefully the three other classes of priests, and to correct any mistake they might commit. He was therefore supposed to know the whole ceremonial, as well as all the hymns employed by the Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, and Udgatṛ. It was only at Somas that he

had to take an active part, and then it was customary to elect another superintendent, called Sadasya, chairman."[52]

The four chief priests, and some of their assistants, are mentioned in the Ṛg-veda. In Maṇḍala ii., 1, 2, Agni is called the Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, and Brahman.[53] Again, in R.V., i., 10, 1, we read, "The singers sing thee, Satakratu,[54] the reciters of the Ṛcas praise thee, who art worthy of praise, the Brahmans raise thee aloft, like a bamboo pole". Here the singers are not called by their technical name of Udgatṛs, but Gāyatṛns, literally those who employ the Gāyatrī-metre; and the reciters are not designated by their technical name of Hotṛ. but Arkins. This shows, however, that the Udgatṛ and Hotṛ priests existed as functionaries at that early time. Mention is also made of "Ṛc and Saman verses,"[55] and of "the hymns called the Ṛc and Saman, the metres and the Yajuṣ";[56] thus showing clearly that the division of the sacrifice between the Hotṛ, Udgatṛ, Adhvaryu, and Brahman, was fully established before the completion of the Saṁhitā, or collections of the Ṛg-Vedas.

Every priest must be whole in body, and blameless in life. He must be *anyunyāṅga,* not having too few limbs; *anatiriktāṅga,* not having too many limbs; *dvesata,* regularly shaped; *anatikṛṣṇa,* not being too old; and *anatiśveta,* not being too young. He must above all be *sādhucaraṇa,* a man who leads a proper life.[57]

The priests, however, were conscious of many sins and imperfections in themselves; and hence, like the Levitical priests of old, had to offer prayers and sacrifices for the remission of the same. This they did chiefly at Sattras, when a body of seventeen or twenty-four of them met together at the ceremony, sacrificed for one another, and then solemnly consecrated each other afresh to the sacred service of the gods.

It appears that in very early times, the Āryan sacrificers in India wore a cord *(mekalā, raiśanā)* at the sacrifices. This they did in three ways, corresponding to three kinds of sacrifices.[58] At sacrifices made to men, it was worn round the neck, and called *nivita;*[59] at sacrifices to the manes, it was worn over the right shoulder, and called *pracināvita;*[60] and at sacrifices to deities, it was worn over the left shoulder, and called *upavita.*[61] It had probably a symbolical meaning, pointing to the cord *(rasanā),* with which the victim was tied to the sacrificial post, and indicating by an unmistakable symbolism, that the sacrificer himself was the real victim represented by the bound animal. This is probably the origin of the sacred thread worn by all the three highest classes in India at the present day.

4. The Origin of Sacrifice

Sacrifices, like prayers, have their foundation deep down in the necessities of the soul. Both are the natural outcome of the feelings of dependence upon, and moral relationship to, some supreme Being. Both are expressions of states of consciousness—prayers by words, and sacrifices by acts. And both represent clearly the bright and the dark, the joyous and the fearful sides of those states. The bright and joyous side is represented by eucharistic prayers and thank-offerings; and the dark and fearful, by deprecatory prayers and propitiatory sacrifices. It is unnecessary, therefore, to suppose that prayers and praises are *alone* the result of the feeling of dependence upon God, and sacrifices *alone* the result of the feeling of moral relationship to Him. Both are the result of the same feelings differently expressed. Hence all prayers are not praises, and all sacrifices are not thank-offerings. Some prayers are earnest petitions, imploring the Almighty to bestow that which is needed, and to avert that which is dreaded; and some sacrifices are intended wholly to atone

for sin, and to turn the frowns of the Supreme into smiles. Prayers are the offerings of the lips, and sacrifices the offerings of possessions : but both proceed from the same heart with the same intention.

In a state of sinless purity, we may imagine that man would worship his Creator by praises only, the over flowings of a soul in perfect harmony with itself and all existencies, visible and invisible. But the entrance of sin into the soul was the entrance of discord, of misery, of estrangement from God. The consciousness of sin, and of the loss caused by it, would naturally impel man *to do* something to expiate sin, and so to repair the ruin which it had effected. And what could he do, but relinquish, and devoutly present to God, what he himself most cherished and valued? What could he do, but perform those acts of kindness which among men are calculated to maintain friendly feelings when present, and to restore such feelings when absent? Actuated by these motives, the Vedic Āryans offered to their gods the food—consisting of vegetable and animal,—and the drink,—consisting of milk and the soul-inspiring soma juice,—which they loved so well themselves. No wonder, then, that so many hymns contain invocations to the gods to descend from their ethereal mansions above to sit in a friendly manner with their votaries on the green grass of the earth, and to partake of the choice viands prepared for them ! It appears from the hymns addressed to Varuṇa, that vegetable food predominated among the Āryans in the earliest age, as it probably did among the Hebrews, reminiscence of which was preserved in the Jewish "shew-bread," which was constantly kept on the altar before Jehovah.[62] But when the Āryans developed into mighty conquerors, delighting in war, with Indra as their chief deity, bloody sacrifices assumed supreme importance. And human sacrifices — which origi-

nated either in grateful feelings towards the gods, for victories gained over enemies, and the consequent desire to offer the captives to them, as an expression of those feelings, or in the desire to give up to the gods one's dearest possession, one's own kith and kin, which is the logical conclusion of all other sacrifices – appeared about the same time. This is obvious from the few traces of human sacrifices found in the Mantras, or oldest portions of the Vedas, and the high value attached to such sacrifices in the Brāhmaṇas, or later portions. There is no need, therefore, to suppose, as some do, that human sacrifices are remnants of cannibalism. Such a supposition assumes that all nations have once been cannibals, inasmuch as all nations have been guilty of offering human sacrifices; an assumption which derives no support whatever either from the earliest records of the Āryan, or of the Semitic nations.

But though sacrifice of possessions is the most natural and significant expression of man's consciousness of sin, and of his strong desire to avert the punishment due to it, by propitiating the gods; and though we grant that such an act is the spontaneous outcome of the felt spiritual necessities of human nature; yet, the *true* meaning of the act could no more be discovered by human reason, unaided by revelation, than could the Being himself to whom such homage is due.

The Vedic notion was that, by the act of sacrifice *alone,* the gods could be pacified and their favour secured. And this is the prevalent notion among all heathen nations. Hence the sacrificer was identified with the sacrifice, and his sin was supposed to pass directly to the victim. "The sacrificer is himself the victim. It takes the very sacrificer himself to heaven."[63] "The animal is man by allegory." "The sacrificer is the animal " *(yajamānaḥ paśuḥ)*. "The animal is ultimately the sacrificer himself." "The sacrificer is indeed the

sacrifice"[64] *(yajamāno vai yajñaḥ)*. The sacrificer kills, on the day previous to the Soma festival, an animal devoted to Agni-soma, thus redeeming himself from the obligation of being himself sacrificed. He then brings his Soma sacrifice, after having thus redeemed himself, and become free from debts.[65] That even the Jews, with all their privileges, completely forgot the original purport of sacrifices as revealed to them, the following quotation from Isaac Abrabenel, one of their most learned and approved writers, shows : "The blood of the offerer deserved to be shed, and his body to be burned for his sin, only the mercy of the Divine Name accepted this offering from him as a substitute and propitiation, whose blood should be instead of his blood, and its life instead of his life ".

Now, that this notion is erroneous is the testimony both of Reason and Revelation.

It is an historical fact, that when the sages of the Upaniṣads considered philosophically the prevalent doctrine of sacrifice, as the means of liberating the soul from the bonds of sin, they pronounced sacrifices useless. And we are told that "the Greek masters not unfrequently expressed their astonishment how, and upon what natural principle, so strange an institution as that of animal sacrifice could ever have originated; for as to the notion of its being pleasing to the Deity, such a thing struck them as a manifest impossibility".[66] This is also the testimony of Revelation.[67] And yet the notion of sacrifice being pleasing to the gods was too deeply rooted in human nature to be eradicated by philosophical speculations, either in the East or in the West. Even Buddhism, though it abolished sacrifices, failed to destroy the *doctrine,* which found expression for a time in asceticism and mortification of the flesh; and afterwards, in India, it reasserted itself by reverting to its original type. Here, then, is an apparent

opposition between the dictates of reason and the dictates of two imperious impulses of human nature respecting the doctrine of sacrifice. Is there no way of reconciling them?

It is impossible to reconcile them on the assumption that, when man began to sacrifice, he was too low in the scale of evolution to reason, and hence that he acted more like an animal from instincts and impulses than from higher data. For whether man descended from some "arboreal animal with pointed ears," or was "created in the image of God," we must believe, that at the point when he manifested religious faculties, he must have been a man in the full sense of that term— "a thinker," possessing the same powers and tendencies as he possesses at present; otherwise we have no data from which to reason about what he was either capable of, or likely to do. Indeed, the evidence of Language is decisive on this point; and it is the only evidence worth listening to concerning pre-historic times. Even language is a monument to the fact, that man had been pre-eminently endowed with the powers of observation and elaboration when that language was formed; and, as religion is unknown without language, we may legitimately conclude that he possessed such powers when he expressed the religious tendency of his nature in prayer and sacrifice.

Neither will the well-known argument, that bloody sacrifices naturally originated in the idea of God, as a terribly malevolent Being always thirsting for blood, remove the difficulty. For there is nothing plainer than that the higher up we trace the stream of Vedic religious thought, the more we are impressed with the fact, that the predominant characteristic of the gods was beneficence, and not malevolence.

What explanation, then, can be given of the fact that while the Vedic notion of sacrifices is repugnant to Reason and Revelation, sacrifices were eminently popular, and had

their root deep down in the nature of man? The explanation is found in the *true* meaning of sacrifices; and for the *true* meaning, we are dependent upon Revelation. Sacrifices, as the result of two powerful feelings of human nature, express an eternal fact, viz., that sin must be atoned for, or punishment be inflicted. This is in harmony with reason. But the notion that the sacrifice of possessions, however valuable, can atone for sin and avert punishment, is contrary to reason. This paradox is solved in the Bible; for we read that sacrifices were constituted by God, soon after the entrance of sin into the soul of man, as "a shadow of good things to come," as symbols of the sacrifice of Jesus, "the Lamb of God," and of the doctrine included in that future act. Hence sacrifices were intended to remind man of sin and the punishment of spiritual death due to it, and to portray before him the sacrifice of the Saviour, which alone was sufficient to atone for sin, and to satisfy the spiritual cravings which instinctively and irresistibly found expression in the sacrifice of possessions. This is the *true* meaning of sacrifice; and, viewed in this light, the apparent opposition between the testimony of reason and the powerful feelings which produced sacrifice, vanishes, and its origin appears both *human* and *divine.* It is the outcome of two original feelings of human nature the feelings of dependence upon, and of moral relationship to, God; and it was sanctioned and employed by God, as a type of the means by which sin can be removed and man reconciled to his Creator. But the typical meaning was gradually obscured, and ultimately lost among all nations; and the erroneous notion that sacrifices *alone* can pacify the Deity, and restore friendly feelings between Him and His worshippers, was substituted. Whereas the *true* idea is, that only such sacrifices as were offered, with the consciousness of their typical meaning, could be well pleasing to God. Hence we read,

that the difference between the sacrifices of Cain and Abel – the first sacrifices on record – lay in the disposition of the brothers. Abel offered a fuller sacrifice than Cain, because he "offered "it by *faith,*" and received the divine approbation.[68] Now, faith implies a Divine communication, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God".[69] Abel, therefore, offered a more excellent sacrifice than his brother, because he offered it in obedience to the Divine command; or, in other words, because he was conscious of its typical meaning, viz., the salvation of man through the promised Redeemer. When, therefore, the *true* meaning of sacrifice is apprehended by the heathen, they cease to offer animal sacrifices, and that without the consciousness that any feelings of their nature have suffered violence; but, on the contrary, with the consciousness that the profound feelings which led them to sacrifice have been fully satisfied in the apprehension of the *Substance,* of which all sacrifices are mere shadows.

Traces of the original symbolical meaning of sacrifices are discovered here and there in the literature of the Veda. "Puruṣa, born in the beginning," or the first begotten, was immolated on the sacrificial grass by the gods, Sādhyas and Ṛṣis.[70] "Viśvakarman offered him self a sacrifice to himself." "Prajāpati, the lord of creatures, offered himself a sacrifice for the devas;"[71] and in R.V., x., 13, 45, we read that the gods sacrificed to the (supreme) god, or that they offered him up. It is difficult to account for the origin of the idea underlying the sacrifice of Prajāpati, who is elsewhere represented as half mortal and half immortal, or of Viśvakarman, the creator, or Puruṣa, "the begotten in the beginning," except on the supposition of some primitive tradition of Jesus, the Lord of all, the "only begotten of the Father," who of His own accord offered Himself a sacrifice for all men.

Relics of the same tradition are also found in the Teutonic branch of the Āryan family. In one of the old *Rune* songs, Odin, the chief Deity of the Teutons, is represented as hanging, during nine long nights, in the wind-rocked tree, "with a spear, wounded, offering himself to himself".

I wot that I hung on the wind-rocked tree
Nine long nights;
With a spear, wounded,
And to Odin offered
Myself to myself:
On that tree of which none knows
From what root it springs.

5. Meditation and Asceticism

In proportion as Monism, or Pantheism, rose, the consciousness of sin waned. When all existences, including man, were regarded as the phenomenal manifestation of the Ātman–the only existence–there was no more place for sin, as the transgression of an objective law, than there was for an objective creation. Evil and misery, however, were facts too palpable to be ignored; and so an attempt was made to account for them, on the supposition that they are the result of ignorance on the part of man, which leads to the belief that he is something different from the universal Soul. The cause of evil and misery is, therefore, the mistaken notion that man is an individual, an *ego,* separate from the great Self; and freedom from both is obtained by that knowledge which enables him to identify his own self with the highest Self. And that knowledge can be acquired only by Penance and Meditation. Sacrifices and good works are not wholly ignored; on the contrary, they are encouraged as the means of attaining the bliss of heaven for a time, which, according to the Upaniṣads, is very different from union with Brahma.

In some Upaniṣads these are inculcated as necessary preliminaries to a life of penance and meditation in the forest. A man, we are told, must pass through the two stages of a student of the Vedas, and of a married householder, before he can retire to the forest; whence he must pass to the fourth or last stage, viz., that of the Saṁnyāsī or ascetic. Little stress, however, is laid in the Upaniṣads on sacrifice and good works; penance and meditation are the most excellent way.

"Śaunaka, the great householder, approached Aṅgiras respectfully, and asked, Sir, what is that through which, if it is known, everything else becomes known?

"He said to him, Two kinds of knowledge must be known, – this is what all who know Brahma tell us, – the higher and the lower knowledge.

"The lower knowledge is the Ṛg-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, Atharva-Veda, Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa (ceremonial), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chandas (metre), Jyotiṣa (astronomy). But the higher knowledge is that by which the Indestructible (Brahma) is apprehended, that which cannot be seen nor seized, which has no family and no caste, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, the omnipresent (all-pervading), infinitesimal, which the wise regard as the source of all beings."[72]

"Frail," we are told in another Upaniṣad, "are those boats, the sacrifices, in which the lower ceremonial or the lower knowledge exists. Fools who praise this as the highest good are subject again and again to old age and death."

"Considering sacrifice and good works as the best, these fools know no higher good, and having enjoyed their reward on the height of heaven, gained by good works, they enter again this world or a lower one."

Every Hindu is said to be born a debtor to the gods, to the rishis, to the fathers, and to men. He fulfils the first by sacrifices, the second by studying the Vedas, the third by having offspring, and the fourth by hospitality and kindness.[73] The man who fulfils these duties is free from blame; he is a performer of good works according to the "lower knowledge," and will "enjoy his reward on the height of heaven"; but he will be subject to be born again. "Those," on the other hand, "who practise penance and faith in the forest, tranquil, wise, and living on alms, depart free from passion, through the sun, to where that immortal person dwells, whose nature is imperishable".[74]

"He who has perceived that which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without taste, eternal, without smell, without beginning, without end, beyond the great and unchangeable, is freed from the jaws of death."[75] "As water does not cling to a lotus leaf, so no evil clings to one who knows the Self." "The wise, who by meditation on his self, recognises the Ancient, – who is difficult to be seen, who has entered into the dark, who is hidden in the cave, who dwells in the abyss, – as God, he indeed leaves joy and sorrow far behind."[76]

The means of acquiring that knowledge, by which a man obtains freedom from evil, and immortality in the Immortal, is the sixfold Yoga, *viz.*, "restraint of the breath, restraint of the senses, meditation, fixed attention, investigation, and absorption". "When beholding by this Yoga, he (a man) beholds the gold-coloured maker, the lord, the person, Brahma, the cause; then the sage, leaving behind good and evil, makes everything (breath), organs of sense, body, etc., to be one in the Highest Indestructible."

And thus it has been said elsewhere, "There is the superior fixed attention for him, viz., if he presses the tip of

his tongue down the palate, and restrains voice, mind, and breath, he sees Brahma by discrimination. And when after the cessation of mind, he sees his own self, smaller than the small, and shining as the Highest Self, then having seen his self in the Self, he becomes selfless; and because he is selfless, he is without limit, without cause, absorbed in thought. This is the highest mystery, viz., final liberation."[77]

The Soteriology of the Upaniṣads is far more illogical and puerile than that of the Mantras and Brāhmaṇas. For if man be only a phenomenal creature of phenomenal circumstances over which he has no control, he cannot be held accountable for his actions. He is as much the creature of organism and environment as the beast of the field. And if he be only a phenomenal manifestation of the Universal Soul, which is both the material and efficient cause of all things, there can be no room for either good or evil, which imply the exercise of free-will. Nothing, therefore, that he may do can have the least influence on his character and destiny; and hence, logically, no plan of salvation is either necessary or possible. Human nature, however, is stronger than logic; and, hence, the inextricable confusion in which the philosophers of the Upaniṣads have involved themselves.

6. Retrospect and Conclusion

We have now passed in review the Literature, the Theology, the Cosmology, the Anthropology, and the Soteriology of the Vedas. We have followed the stream of Āryan religious and speculative thought, in all its ramifications, through the Mantra, Brāhmaṇa, and Upaniṣad stages of its descent. We have considered the Hindu Āryans conception of God, their speculations on the creation of the world, and their notion of the origin, nature, and destiny of man, in each of those stages. We have pushed our inquiries as far back in

time as the records would permit; and we have found that the religious and speculative thought of the people was far purer, simpler, and more rational at the farthest point we reached, than at the nearest or latest in the Vedic age. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable, viz.: *That the development of religious thought in India has been uniformly downward, and not upward—deterioration, and not evolution.*

We have also seen that the point reached by us was not the point whence the deterioration began; and that in proportion as we go back in time, the number of the gods grows less, and the ethical consciousness of sin grows stronger. Hence the probability is that, if we could go back far enough in time, so as to reach the point whence the deterioration began, *we should find a monotheistic religion, pure and simple.*

We have seen, further, that the knowledge of the divine attributes possessed by the Vedic Āryans was neither the product of Intuition nor Experience, but a surival, or a reminiscence. We are justified, therefore, in concluding (until the contrary is proved), *that the higher and purer conceptions of the Vedic Āryans were the results of a Primitive Divine Revelation.*

The theory of a Primitive Divine Revelation alone is capable of explaining all the religious ideas of the Vedas, such as an object of worship, sin, mercy, sacrifice, a future state. These ideas are all foreign to Nature. Sun, moon, earth, mountains, and rivers, have nothing to do with worship, with forgiving sin, and with preserving men from guilt. But they are quite at home in the theory of a primeval revelation. We must believe that the most probable theory is that which explains all the facts. The theory of Natural Evolution cannot explain all the facts. But the theory of a Primitive Divine Revelation, whatever hard words may be said about it as

being unscientific, does explain all the facts. It tells us that the presence of such ideas in the Vedas as God, confession of sin, petitions for mercy, sacrifice, and a life after death, are relics of a vanishing Revelation, held mechanically, without any comprehension of their meaning. Granting that this is only a theory, the opposite view is no more. Between these two theories, there is; however, this difference.The one is in harmony with the teaching of a venerable old book, against which no weapon formed has yet prevailed; the other is in opposition to it.

REFERENCES

1. Johnson's *Oriental Religions,* vol. i., p. 90.
2. R.-V., viii., 24, 20.
3. *Ibid.,* vi., 16, 47.
4. Compare Hosea, xv., 2; Hebrews, xiii., 15; Ps., cxix., 108.
5. R.V., x., 47, 7; vii., 31, 12.
6. *Ibid.,* viii., 12, 19, 22.
7. *Ibid.,* iii., 5, 2.
8. *Ibid.,* vi., 75, 19.
9. *Ibid.,* v., 85, 7, 8.
10. R.V., x., 151; ii., 26, 3
11. *Ibid.,* vii., 99, 4.
12. *Ibid.,* i., 164, 34, 5.
13. *Ibid.,* x., 82, 90, 130.
14. R.V., x., 90.
15. *Śat. Br.,* x., 43, 1, 8.
16. R.V., x., 88; x., 135, 154.
17. *Ibid.,* viii., 31, 16.
18. *Ibid.,* x., 42, 4.
19. *Śat. Br.,* ii., 6, 4, 8.
20. R.V., vii., 82, 7.
21. *Tāṇḍya Br.*
22. *Śat. Br.,* i., 8, 1, 7.

23. viii., 18, 20.
24. They contain, —*Aṣṭaka,* or sacrifices on the eighth day of the four dark halves of the winter months, from October-November to January-February; *Pārvaṇa,* sacrifices on the new and full moon; *Śrāddha,* funeral oblations; *Śrāvaṇī, Agrahāyaṇi, Saitri,* and *Aśvayugi,* the days of full moon, from July-August, from November-December, from March-April, and from September-October. Under this head naturally fall the five daily oblations, called emphatically the five *Mahāyajñas,* or great sacrifices, oblations: (1) to the gods, (2) to the pitṛs, (3) to all creatures, (4) to the ṛṣis, (5) to men. The first is performed by an oblation to the ods offered on the domestic fire; the scond by pouring out water to the spirits of the departed; the third by an offering to animals the fourth by a repetition of the Veda; and the fifth by gifts to men and hospitality to guests.
25. They contain, —*Agnyādheya,* the ceremony at which the young householder kindles for the first time, by means of friction, the scared fire (*gārhapatya),* and puts it in a separate place in the house, called *agāra,* where, like the Jewish fire of the burnt offering [Lev., vi., 9, 13], it must never be allowed to go out; *Agnihotra,* morning and evening oblations of milk to the fire called *ahavaniya,* kindled by means of the *gārhapatya* of the *agāra,* which ceremony must terminate only with life; *Darśapūrṇamāsa,* half monthly sacrifices, performed at new and full moon, which was a meat offering; *Agrayaneṣṭī,* the first fruits of the harvest, offered generally twice a year [compare Lev., xxiii., 9, 14]; *Cāturmāsya,* the sacrifice offered at the beginning of every four months, viz., —at the beginning of Spring (*Vasanta),* the rainy season (*Praviṣ*), and Autumn (*Śarad),* —the obligation to perform it lasting from one to seven years; *Nirūdhapaśu-bandha,* an animal sacrifice offered separately, and not forming an integral part of another ceremony, made once a year at the beginning of the rainy season in the house of the sacrificer, and consisted

of a he-goat and meat offering; *Śautrāmani,* a ceremony forming the last act of a *Somayajña*, whose object was to cleanse the priests who might have drunk to excess, and to release the sacrificer from all sin; a goat, a ram, and a bull, together with spirituous liquor, were necessary for this ceremony.

26. R.V., ii., 7, 5.
27. *Haug.*, vol. i., 8.
28. These, containing *Agniṣṭoma, Atyagniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Śoḍasin, Vājapeya, Atirātra,* and *Aptoryāma,* are all different forms of the Somayajña; varying in the number of victims sacrificed, but chiefly in the number of stomas, or praises offered to the deities.
29. R.V., i., 30, 2; iii., 53, 7.
30. *Ibid.*, 72, 6; i., 2; iv., 12, 1.
31. R.V., viii., 48, 3.
32. Herod., vi., 71.
33. The text has only, "I ask that"; the Scholiast supplies "life," *tadayus*. The addition might be disputed, but its propriety is confirmed by the concluding expression, *ma na āyuḥ pra moṣeḥ,* do not take away our life (Prof. Wilson's Ṛg. Veda, vol. i., p. 63).
34. In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad, a father is introduced as offering a Sarvamedha, or "All-sacrifice," when all that a man possessed is supposed to be given up. He, however, neglected to offer his son, and, strange to say, the son taunted him for not having fulfilled his vow. Thereupon the father, though exceedingly angry, and against his will, offered up his son.
35. *Hist. Sans. Lit.*, pp. 419. 20.
36. *Ś. Br.,* xiii., 6, 1, 6, 11; 7, 1, 1, 12.
37. *Ibid.,* vii., 2, 1, 18.
38. Barth's *Religions of India,* p. 58.
39. R.V., i., 17.
40. *Ibid.,* viii., 19, 20.
41. *Ibid.,* vii., 17, 4.

42. *Ś. P. Br.*, i., 9, 1, 3; iii., 8, 2, 9.
43. R.V., iv., 3, 15.
44. *Ibid.*, iv., 4, 7.
45. One of the curses put on its head was this:
"If any evil is threatening
To the sacrificer, or to all Egypt,
May it be put on this head".
46. *Essays on the Religions of the Hindus,* pp. 266, 267.
47. R.V., iii., 28.
48. After the flood, Noah was priest to his own family, and so also was Abraham. When the family of Abraham became a clan, Jacob, the Patriarch, was their priest. But when the Hebrews became a nation, a tribe was set apart for the priestly office.
49. *Ś. P. Br.*, i., 6, 1, 20.
50. The tribe grew into a nation soon in those days, for when the Ṛg-Veda was composed, the age of man, as fixed by the gods, was held to be 100 years (R.V., i., 89, 9; ii., 914, etc.).
51. The *Hotṛ* was assisted by Maitrāvaruṇa, Aṣāvāka, and Grāvastut.
Adhvaryu, by Pratiparsthātri, Nestri, and Unnetri.
Udgatṛ, by Prastotri, Sutramanya, and Pratihartri.
Brahman, by Brāhmaṇāchausin, Potri, and Agnidhra.
52. M. M., *Sans. Lit.*, p. 471.
53. See also R.V., iii., 35, 10; x., 52, 2.
54. A name of Indra, meaning he to whom hundreds of victims are offered at a sacrifice.
55. R.V., x., 71, 11; viii., 71, 5.
56. *Ibid.*, x., 90, 9.
57. Compare the qualifications necessary for the Levitical priesthood. (Leviticus, xxi., 17, 21).
58. *Tait. Sām.*, ii., 5, 11, 1.
59. *Ṣaḍviṁśa Br.*, iii., 8; *Kāty. Sr. S.*, xv., 5, 13.
60. Ath.V., ix., 1, 24; *Tait. Br.* 1, 4,, 6, 6.
61. *Vāj. Sam.*, xvi., 17; *Ś. P. Br.*, xii., 8, 1, 19.

62. Exodus, xxv., 30; Lev., xxiv., 5.
63. *Tait. Br.,* iii., 12, 4, 3.
64. *Śat. Br.,* xi., 1, 8, 3; *Tait. Br.,* ii., 2, 8, 2; *Ait. Br.,* i., 28.
65. *Kaushita and Ait. Brs.* The initiation *(dikṣā)* of the sacrificer constitutes his consecreation as the victim at the animal sacrifice (*Śat. Br.,* xi., 7, 1, 3; *Ait. Br.,* ii., 3, 9, 11); or as the sacrificial food at the *haviryajña* (*Śat. Br.,* iii., 3, 4, 2; *Tait. Br.,* iii., 2, 8, 9); or as the horse at the horse sacrifice (*Tait. Br.,* iii., 17, 4, 5).
66. Kitto.
67. Heb., x., 4, 5, 6.
68. Gen., iv., 3, 7; Heb., ix., 4.
69. Rom., x., 17.
70. R.V., x., 90, 7.
71. *Tāṇḍya Br.*
72. *Muṇḍaka Up.,* i., 3, 4, 5, 6.
73. *Śat. Br.,* i., 7, 2, 1, 5.
74. *Ibid.,* ii., 7, 10, 11.
75. *Kaṭha. Up.,* 1, 3; *Valli. 15.*
76. *Kaṭha. Up., Valli.,* i., 2, 12.
77. *Mantrāyana Brāhmaṇa Up.,* vi., 18, 20. Compare the words of an abbot of Mount Athos, of the eleventh century, as given by Gibbon: "When thou art alone in they cell, shut thy door and seat thyself in a corner; raise thy mind above all things vain and transitory; recline thy heart and chin on thy breast; turn thy eyes and they thoughts towards the middle of thy belly, the region of the navel, and search the place of the heart, the seat of the soul. At first all wll be dark and comfortless; but if you perservere day and night, you will feel an effable joy; and no sooner has the soul discovered the place of the heart, than it is encircled in a mystical ethereal light."

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